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The Biographer's Art

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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February 10, 1979 Price One Dollar

Eugene Genovese
Slaves Make History

Irving Howe
Personal Poetry

Our Refugee Problem

Michael Walzer

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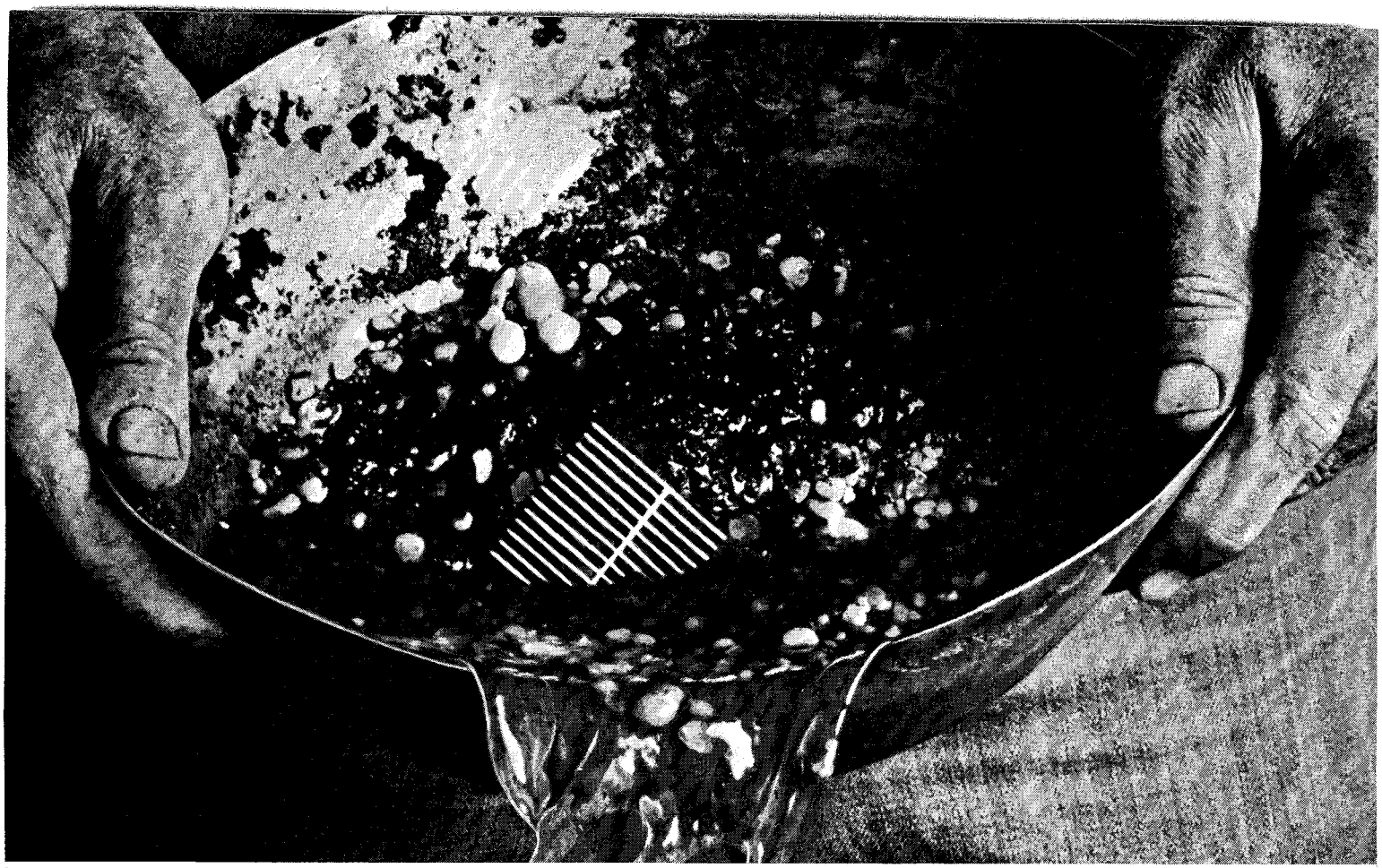

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TRB

from Washington
February 10, 1979

Occupational Hazard

The nipping wind rustles the leathery magnolia leaves on either side of the White House as we gather on the South Lawn. The ground is snow-streaked. The honor guard parades, the band plays and the crowd waits on the four sides of the small central area where the stand is set for President and Mrs. Carter and Vice Premier Teng and his wife, Cho Lin, and their tall interpreter. They enter, hear the national anthem, inspect the honor guard, and now Jimmy Carter is speaking right in front of me.

There is a disturbance in the working press section 15 feet from where the president talks. Carter doesn't stop. If the disturber has a gun Carter is a dead man. It is a woman; instead of a gun she has Mao's little red book. She is muffled in a minute and dragged off when her companion, a man, also in the press section, begins to shout. Out he goes. They are not efficient disrupters. If they really shrieked, the sound would have gone around the world, by satellite to China. Even as we stand we can hear the occasional growl of protest coming from the small protest crowd in the Ellipse—over toward the Washington Monument. The loudspeakers out there pick up the intermittent noises; nobody pays attention—there is a ritual protest for almost any foreign visitor.

But this is different. Security has been breached. Reporters for years have insisted on the right of minority pressmen to attend ceremonies. If Sonia Ransom had wanted to she could have killed the president with the greatest of ease: she was properly accredited by the Seattle police; her companion, Keith Kozimoto, by New York police. The Secret Service accepted the accreditations.

Being president is one of the world's dangerous jobs. Occupational hazard—assassination. We don't like to think about it. In the Senate Teddy Kennedy will have another try at gun control legislation in February but chances are slim. Crime is as American as apple pie. A 1976 report to the Conference of Mayors estimated 40 million hand guns in the country, a figure increasing by 2.5 million a year: 100 million by the year 2000. A poll shows two-thirds of the gun owners fear crime, keep guns for self-defense; we citizens arm as superpowers do, fearing arms of our neighbors.

Here's the record on presidential assassinations and attempts:

Andrew Jackson, 1835, attempt.
Abraham Lincoln, 1865, killed.
James Garfield, 1881, killed.
William McKinley, 1901, killed.
Theodore Roosevelt, 1912, ex-president, wounded.
Franklin Roosevelt, 1933, attempt (Mayor Cermak killed).
Truman, 1950, attempt.
Kennedy, 1963, killed (Robert Kennedy later killed).
Ford, 1975, two attempts.

In summary, of the 32 men who have held the presidency since 1835, attempts were made against nine, and four succeeded. One in eight.

I have followed presidents many years and I have come to the conclusion that they can't really be protected. The hand outstretched to greet them from the crowd across the fence may hold a gun. It is part of our culture that we expect presidents to take the chance and allow devilish handguns to be sold. We are alone among nations in this tolerance for guns. I don't mean to be ghoulish, but in the seconds of that disturbance on the South Lawn last Monday (a minor incident—$100 fine for disturbing the peace), I could see the fallen figure, feel the commotion, listen to the shrieks on radio and TV, hear the great newspaper presses rumbling out their black, black headlines.

Weapons don't cost much. Here's the record of prices paid from Robert Sherrill's grim study, "The Saturday Night Special":

Booth shot Lincoln with a .44 derringer	$15.00
Guiteau killed McKinley with a .44 revolver	10.00
Czolgosz used a 5-shot .32 to murder Garfield	4.50
Oswald's mail-order carbine against Kennedy	21.45*
(*plus $1.50 for postage)	
	$50.95

Oswald got his murder gun from an advertisement in the *American Rifleman*, a magazine published by the National Rifle Association. The ad was placed by the Klein's Sporting Goods Co., Chicago. Gun advertising is a lucrative form of income for the NRA, which has a million members, a $20-million budget, and a building in Washington. It is probably the most powerful single-shot lobby in the city. There is nothing wrong with the sportsmen's guns, of course. But the NRA is so paranoid about restrictions that it protects handguns. Every poll for 50 years has shown the public wants handgun control, but Congress won't let us have it: it is cowed by the NRA, which can whip up half a million letters overnight. The gun lobby is believed to have defeated Senator Joseph D. Tydings, Democrat of Maryland and a champion of control, when he ran for reelection in 1970. Carter backed control in 1976 (his paternal grandfather was killed by a handgun in 1904) but he has enough other problems right at the moment—again Teddy Kennedy will move in.

After Jack Kennedy's assassination, Congress passed a weak gun law including a ban on cheap imported "Saturday Night Specials." Afterward, gun distributors just imported the parts and assembled them here. Last year the House overwhelmingly defeated a mild bill to put serial numbers on new firearms to help police trace them. "When are politicians going to have the courage to stand up against the gun lobby?" demanded *The Washington Star*. *The Baltimore Sun* called it "Power and Paranoia." The NRA didn't mind. It called critics "anti-Constitution fanatics" referring to the "right to bear arms" second amendment.

America's murder rate is the wonder of the world. There are more killings overnight in New York than in Tokyo all year. Handgun Control, Inc., a citizens lobby, keeps track month by month: handguns took 465 lives in December.

Five national committees studied crime between 1967 and 1973, headed by Nicholas Katzenbach, Otto Kerner, Milton Eisenhower, Edmund Brown and Russell Peterson. All advocated gun control. Never in history did so many blue-ribbon commissions investigate one subject so intensively in so short a time—and do so little about it. "It's as easy to buy guns as flashlights," said Edward Kennedy, whose two brothers were murdered.

So my heart jumped as Carter talked and the two beside me were dragged away. Will we get gun control? Of course, yes, in time. But not till another president or two are sacrificed, I think.

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AMERICAN INCOME LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY of INDIANA

Serving America's Union Families

Comparative Financial Review

	Years ended December 31, 1977	1976
Income		
Life premiums	$22,340,297	$16,150,742
Accident and health premiums	25,683,413	23,593,214
Investment and other income	4,799,481	4,090,525
Total income	52,823,191	43,834,481
Benefits and expenses		
Life claims and other benefits	4,126,231	3,735,055
Accident and health claims	12,430,024	11,644,002
Increase in liability for future policy benefits	12,196,239	8,711,984
Amortization of policy acquisition costs	5,183,133	4,431,061
Commissions	5,943,151	5,224,771
General expenses and insurance taxes	5,869,697	5,652,642
Dividends to policyholders	298,064	299,032
	46,046,539	39,698,547
Income before income taxes and realized investment gains (losses)	6,776,652	4,135,934
Provision for income taxes		
Current	—	—
Deferred	1,909,150	1,209,252
Income before realized investment gains (losses)	4,867,502	2,926,682
Realized investment gains (losses)	11,364	356,057
Net income	$ 4,878,866	$ 3,282,739
Earnings per share		
Income before realized investment gains (losses)	$ 2.88	$ 1.76
Realized investment gains (losses)	.01	.21
Net income	$ 2.89	$ 1.97

Assets	$116,000,000
Insurance in Force	$1,289,599,000

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Cover: Vietnamese refugees wade ashore from a boat anchored off Pulau Bidong, Malaysia, on December 11, 1978. United Press International Photo. Article on page 15.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

February 10, 1979

The Polar Bear

The nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union and the constant development of their strategic weapons means that we can say that the Soviet Union is already on a par with the US. . . . Look at the Mediterranean, at the Middle East, at northern Africa. . . . We see that last year South Yemen was taken over by the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union gained influence in Ethiopia. If we go farther east there is Afghanistan, and now there is Iran, where there seems no end to the troubles. . . . All this gives serious concern to the countries of the world, and they should deal with it seriously. . . . Since the early 1970s the US has been on the strategic retreat. . . .

Who said this? Henry Jackson? The Committee on the Present Danger? *The National Review*? *Commentary*? No, it was none of them, nor was it even *TNR*, though some of our readers fear we have moved into that conservative camp. No, it was America's distinguished guest, Teng Hsiao-ping, deputy premier of the People's Republic of China, urging that the United States, Japan, Europe and his country join forces to "curb the polar bear," as he told *Time* magazine, or "try to hamper whatever they [the Soviets] do, undermine whatever they do, frustrate what they try to do in any part of the world," as he told a press luncheon in Washington.

Before saying why the United States should *not* join a worldwide cabal against the Soviet Union, we wish to make clear to our readers just where we stand on the question of US relations with the People's Republic. Our position is, as stated in a January 6 editorial: "There is no question that the US and the People's Republic should have diplomatic relations, and good relations, too." At the same time, we said that President Carter's agreement to all the PRC's conditions for normalization—especially breaking the US-Taiwan defense treaty—was "betrayal, not so much of the government of Taiwan, as of its people." It has emerged since normalization took place that the Carter administration made no effort at all to bargain for a continued defense treaty, and also that the US agreed it would make no new weapons sales to Taiwan during 1979, a year when it is most important to keep the island's morale and defenses high. Taiwan, while no democracy, is not the rabid and ruthless right-wing dictatorship that it was in the 1950s, nor is it the focus of powerful reactionary influences in the United States. If any China now fits that bill, it is the People's Republic. Teng gives assurances that he intends the reunification of China to take place "peacefully," but continuing US influence must assure that it is not done coercively and that the mainland regime does not change its mind about using force.

Even though we think it should have been accomplished otherwise, we are pleased that the 30 years' isolation between the US and China are ended, and that a Chinese leader has at last seen fit to visit this country. We are apprehensive that too-high expectations have been created, in both the US and China, about the possibilities for trade and cooperation between our countries, and that unfulfilled hopes may lead to disillusionment. If both sides can come gently down from the emotional high of the normalization season, however, we will be glad to see Americans visit China, sell to it and help it modernize.

But China is asking much more from us than friendship or help in modernizing. It wants us to drop all pretense of detente and to join China in unremitting hostility to the Soviet Union. China believes war with

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the Soviets is inevitable, and wants us to mobilize to fight it. To get things stirred up, China apparently is even threatening an invasion of Russia's ally, Vietnam. At the same time, the PRC is asking for arms from the West, and getting them with President Carter's approval. If Teng cannot get the United States *formally* to join in an anti-Soviet alliance, he is doing what he can to give Soviet leaders the impression that we have done so secretly.

It is true that the Soviet Union threatens US interests wherever it can, and it is important for the US to resist. But the first duty of both the US and the Soviet Union must be to prevent World War III, and for that reason we need to maintain detente on questions of strategic nuclear weaponry. Wherever we can cooperate with the Soviet Union, we should. The more ties of interdependence that exist between us, the more strings we may be able to pull to influence Soviet behavior. For the foreseeable future, though, a state of cutthroat political and military competition will exist with the Soviets. We have to respond with strength where we are challenged, and we need to build military and political strength where we are weak. If Iran falls, for example, it may be necessary for US forces to provide direct security for the Persian Gulf, either with naval vessels or with a US air base in the Middle East.

There are areas where US and Chinese interests in limiting Soviet advances may align. One example is preventing Vietnam from supplying the Soviets with a naval base at Camranh Bay. We believe this interest is *not* served by China attacking Vietnam, and we hope that President Carter not only urged Teng against an invasion, but used western arms sales as a persuasive lever. A Chinese attack on Vietnam, on the pretext of punishment for the Cambodian invasion, might invite a Soviet attack on China. As Teng himself noted in his *Time* interview, "We've already been through two world wars and both started from small incidents. Such things often develop independently of one's will." It is not in the interests of the United States to see small incidents between Russia and China explode into another world war. Our interest is in fostering peace.

More Adventures of Billy Carter

Last September Billy Carter went to Libya as a personal guest of the ruling government, accompanied by several Atlanta businessmen and two state senators. This was the beginning of a protracted episode which has caused Jimmy Carter acute embarrassment. Libya, under the rule of Colonel Qaddafi, has become a fiercely Marxist Islamic theocracy and a major financier of international terrorism. After his tour of the country, Billy praised the Libyans for what he called the "best hospitality in the world," and invited a Libyan delegation to spend five weeks in the United States. Upon returning home, Georgia State Senator Floyd Hudgins, who was with Carter in Libya, announced the creation of a new "Arab-Georgia Friendship Society." Billy Carter himself, on questioning from the press, took to offering observations such as "There's a hell of a lot more Arabians than there is Jews." He blamed Libya's unsavory reputation here on the "Jewish media," which "tears up Arab countries full time."

These hijinks have been widely reported, but President Carter can expect more embarrassments. After the trip to Libya, Carter and the two senators, Floyd Hudgins and Henry Russell, returned to Rome, where they took a Trans World Airways flight to Boston. Soon after boarding the plane, Carter and Russell began drinking, and the gregarious Billy wandered around, introducing himself to the flight crew and other passengers. Appearing somewhat intoxicated, Carter regaled his audience with an account of his trip, alleging that he had had to cut it short because he had run out of bourbon. He showed off an elaborate bracelet made, he said, of 18-carat gold. This was a gift of the Libyan government, he said, and he claimed to have four more like it in his suitcase. When one passenger marveled at the gift, Carter replied, "Hell, that's nothing. They gave Henry a solid gold brick. That's worth one helluva lot of money." At the time Billy was talking about him, Senator Russell was asleep. When contacted last week Russell denied that the Libyans gave him anything more expensive than a picture album. He said the only gift he was aware that Billy Carter received was a silver-inlaid saddle, which was shipped home separately. This saddle has been previously reported.

"I'm the first unofficial contact with Libya," Carter told his fellow passengers. Asked if the president knew about his trip, Billy Carter said, "Sure, he knows all about it." When someone asked what the duty on the gifts would be, Billy replied, "Oh, hell, they're not going to open my luggage." Upon arriving in Boston, Carter and the others in his party were waved through by customs officials, who immediately recognized the president's brother. One even asked for Billy's autograph. Their luggage was not inspected. The only one of the three who paid any duty was Senator Hudgins, who paid just a few dollars. The duty-free allowance for returning travelers was $100 a person at that time (it is now $300). The tax on anything above the limit is 12 percent.

Senator Hudgins refused to discuss any aspect of the Libyan trip. *TNR* tried repeatedly to give Billy Carter an opportunity to contest this story, without success. After several calls to his attorney, John Parks of Americus, Georgia, we received a call from a Carter business associate, Randy Coleman, who accompanied

(continued on page 10)

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Correspondence

Curing inflation

To the editors:

"Liberals and Inflation" (*TNR*, January 20) is a provocative editorial with a deliberately mixed bag of possible solutions, many of which could be helpful in stabilizing and equalizing the economy. But lowering minimum wage laws (without even suggesting lowering maximum profits) seems a low blow to the already penalized, who may often see welfare (or crime) as preferable to exhausting, demeaning, and/or meaningless low-paid jobs. Such welfare payments (or prison maintenance) could better be used to help provide decent wages in constructive government programs if private business can't or won't provide them.

I was astonished to find no mention whatever of the inflationary effects of military spending. Money, resources and labor that go into producing nonconsumable and nonserviceable materials (quite apart from their destructive uses) are not going into the *real* "economic growth" advocated—which is not, incidentally, a good in itself: it depends on what kind. "Growth" can be more cancerous than healthy if it occurs in military hardware, showy real estate (e.g. the World Trade Center, my particular bugaboo), luxury items, junk food and packaging, etc. rather than well-built low-cost housing, better mass transportation and education, safe renewable energy research and development.

It is uncertain, of course, that a capitalist economy that permits unrestrained profits, subsidies of big corporations like Lockheed, and the monopolistic prices and practices of multinational corporations, can or will achieve a stable, equitable and democratic society that does not suffer from inflations, depressions, unemployment, gross waste—and large military spending and sales as temporary "cures." No other country has completely done so either, but I suspect the Scandinavian models are a bit closer to it than we are. Their relatively small size is not the crucial factor, as some believe—there are smaller countries which are dictatorships, and larger democracies such as the US have geographical areas forming natural economic units. We could decentralize many more of our industries and utilities, while making natural monopolies more responsible to the people they serve. But all this would, of course, require the "will" of the people, and some wills are considerably more powerful and well-heeled than others.

Ann Morrissett Davidon
Haverford, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

Your January 20 editorial on liberals and inflation did not mention what many believe to be the greatest cause of inflation of all: military spending. *Scientific American* has proposed a better and a safer defense for the US and its allies at a savings of $50 billion a year. Another $5 billion could be cut off by cutting out the waste, duplication and graft from the Pentagon. As Senator McGovern has pointed out, the cost of the entire New Deal from 1933 to 1940 was only $50 billion. The projected Pentagon budget for 1980: $137 billion.

C. Emory Burton
Huntsville, Alabama

Shrieking lament

To the editors:

If Taiwan was actually in danger, your shrieking lament over President Carter's play of the China card might make some sense (*TNR*, January 6). That an invasion of Taiwan would be a feat of arms comparable to the Normandy landings or the American descent on Okinawa places it beyond the realm of the Chinese forces, now busily deploying away from the Formosa strait. Why would China venture so uncertain an expedition, whose failure would be a spectacular blow to her prestige and whose success would merely accomplish what is acknowledged anyway, when she has been thus far effectively deterred by the police departments of Hong Kong and Macao?

In de-recognizing Taiwan's claim to represent China, we are acknowledging what is agreed in Taipei and Peking, that there is but one China and Taiwan is a part of it. Exactly what part and under what conditions are to be left to the Chinese themselves. Off our own shores there is a similar situation with Puerto Rico. The United States bitterly resents being told that Puerto Rico is not part of the United States. We regard our relationship with Puerto Rico as our own business, as does China her relationship with Taiwan. China's position with respect to recognition and the treaty is hardly unreasonable.

Taiwan has no valid reason to complain of our faithlessness. We stood by them past the point where it had become ludicrous. On their behalf, we locked ourselves into an absurd policy for almost 30 years, possibly a record for a great power, in exchange for which our checks were cashed promptly. The Taiwanese will sulk for awhile, as is their right, and then make their own deal with Peking. They will bargain more shrewdly on their own behalf than we could for them, for they are not without their own cards.

Finally, why is it we who must meet some unspecified test of reliability all the time? Apparently we can prove our steadfastness to our allies only by getting into preposterous positions and staying in them forever. They laugh at us while we do so and then supposedly become indignant when we take the lampshade off our head. They all recognized Peking years ago. Why must we continue to play the buffoon? This nonsense about our allies and unnamed small countries no longer counting on us has nothing to do with foreign affairs. It is strictly for domestic consumption and as such is a species of consumer fraud.

The real lesson (and tragedy) of Nationalist China, South Vietnam and perhaps Iran is that we cannot protect people from the consequences of their own stupidity. That we involved ourselves with them in the first place may have been a mark of our stupidity, but those who count on its perpetuation in their behalf forget that even the most blockheaded power will eventually remember that it has its own interests. Great powers do not long permit themselves to be led painfully about by the nose. That is why they are great powers. It is not Carter who turned in a "pathetic performance for a great power," but those who created and continued the situation he has repudiated.

Edward B. Furey Jr.
Oakdale, New York

Putting pressure on Vietnam

To the editors:

What can be done to participate in correcting the wrong unjustly inflicted against the Kampuchean people ("Thanks, But No Thanks," *TNR*, January 20)? The best way to approach this problem is to deny Vietnam all aid

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and trade relations. In fact, some developed countries (Denmark and Holland) have already started this policy of stopping aid to Vietnam, while Japan has made it clear to the Vietnamese authorities that Japan's promise to grant aid to Vietnam would have to be completely reconsidered in light of Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea. Whatever aid is earmarked for Vietnam's reconstruction by the developed countries should be given to Kampuchea, provided this country's leadership makes real efforts to re-establish its relations with other countries to a more normal level, and adopts more liberal treatment toward its own citizens.

It is too dangerous for the world conscience in the long run to let Vietnam commit such an open act of violation of international law and human rights without a minimum of countervailing pressure from the civilized world to redress this tragic situation.

Mean Sangkhim
New York, New York

Ineradicable prejudice

To the editors:

In his review of Harvey C. Mansfield Jr.'s *The Spirit of Liberalism* (*TNR*, January 20), Robert Paul Wolff says that he did not find the book "provocative," "enjoyable," or "a good read," as he expected, and that he would have found it stimulating to engage in a debate with Mansfield, if only the author had "come out from behind the protective language of these essays and argued his own considered position." I agree with Professor Wolff that the debate would have been stimulating, even instructive, but I think the fault lies entirely with his review, which combines ad hominems (which deserve no response) with false assertions.

For example, Wolff charges Mansfield with "anachronistic" and "pious" invocations of ancient authority, specifically Aristotle. The context is Mansfield's discussion of the right of revolution in the Declaration of Independence as an illustration of the importance of choice. Wolff quotes Mansfield as saying he will "consider the later submergence of choice in conservatism and in Marxism, and then . . . reach back for a more original view in Aristotle." Wolff retorts: "We are not told *why* the reading of Aristotle's *Politics* will help us in our diagnosis of liberalism and its opponents, merely that it will." Now Professor Wolff calls himself "a philosopher, and what is more . . . an historian of philosophy," with "an ineradicable prejudice in favor of any author who takes old texts seriously." How, then, could he have overlooked Mansfield's clear application of Aristotle's discussion of revolution, in *Politics* V, to the question of a right of revolution?

In another passage Wolff charges the author with not being the friend of liberalism he claims to be and with "having a poignant longing for the old ways of thought . . . however unsuited they may be to . . . our present social situation." Wolff concludes this from a passage he quoted, in which Mansfield said that "the ancient writers . . . constitute the true alternative to liberalism" because they are the only ones who question the "Machiavellian premise," held by "liberalism in one or several of its forms or perversions," that "all government is essentially oppression." Wolff mistakenly identifies the Machiavellian premise with anarchism, showing no awareness of Mansfield's earlier statement that Machiavelli "was the first to teach that man was born a needy being, not merely in having needs but in being unprovided in his most essential needs," and that therefore the goal of politics is mastery. According to Mansfield, this point was taken over and transformed by Hobbes, the founder of liberalism, and Kant's reaction to this, called idealism, remains disguised realism. As for the ancient writers, who questioned the Machiavellian premise, Mansfield rules out a revival of their thought, but he does suggest a contribution they can make: "One who wishes to understand liberalism from without can use its two tendencies, moralistic and mundane [idealism and realism] according to the times."

The Spirit of Liberalism is a carefully argued work which subjects current political orthodoxies to the scrutiny of political philosophy. One would not have known this from Professor Wolff's review, perhaps because his propensity for "ineradicable prejudice" gets in the way of his philosophizing.

Murray P. Dry
Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vermont

Old socialists gone reactionary

To the editors:

Hugh Thomas's review of *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (*TNR*, January 13) reads like old socialists gone reactionary. Rather than honest skepticism, which is usually a *New Republic* strength, this review is both sour and bitter. Given a few more pages I have to wonder if he would have begun to espouse the attributes of life under the Battista regime. Even the worst of third world leaders, apologists, and ideologues have to deal with the oppression and imprisonment of dissidents—the reviewer doesn't mention that Castro has begun to do so. More importantly he doesn't mention and hasn't internalized the excellent scholarship on life in Cuba since 1960. The history that he says is missing can be found in books like *The Transformation of Political Culture In Cuba* by Richard Fagan, *Cuba: The Economic and Social Revolution* by Dudley Seers, and essays by Richard Jolly and Jonathan Kozol. These are but a few of many works that do not deny problems and perversions in Cuban society and yet elucidate the end of class and race disparity and the beginning of social, medical, and educational progress.

Alan Wieder
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Sheer hard labor

To the editors:

Erica Jong makes one major mistake in her article on "Creativity vs. Generativity" (*TNR*, January 13). She sets out to examine an "unexamined lie": the metaphor that links pregnancy to the creative process. Her error is in not distinguishing between the gestation and the birth.

Just as nine months elapse between the fertilization of the human egg and the birth of the baby, months in which, as Ms. Jong rightly points out, the mother's part is passive, so there is usually a time lapse between the fertilization of the creator's mind and the actual creation of the poem, image or character. This is also a time during which the artist is passive; the idea simmers and grows, seemingly of its own accord.

Both birth processes require very intense labor. Jong seems to sense this when she writes "literary creativity is sheer hard labor." It is not an accident, or a mistake, that birth has been called labor for generations. It is the hardest physical work most women do in their entire lives.

Lallie O'Brien
Middlebury, Connecticut

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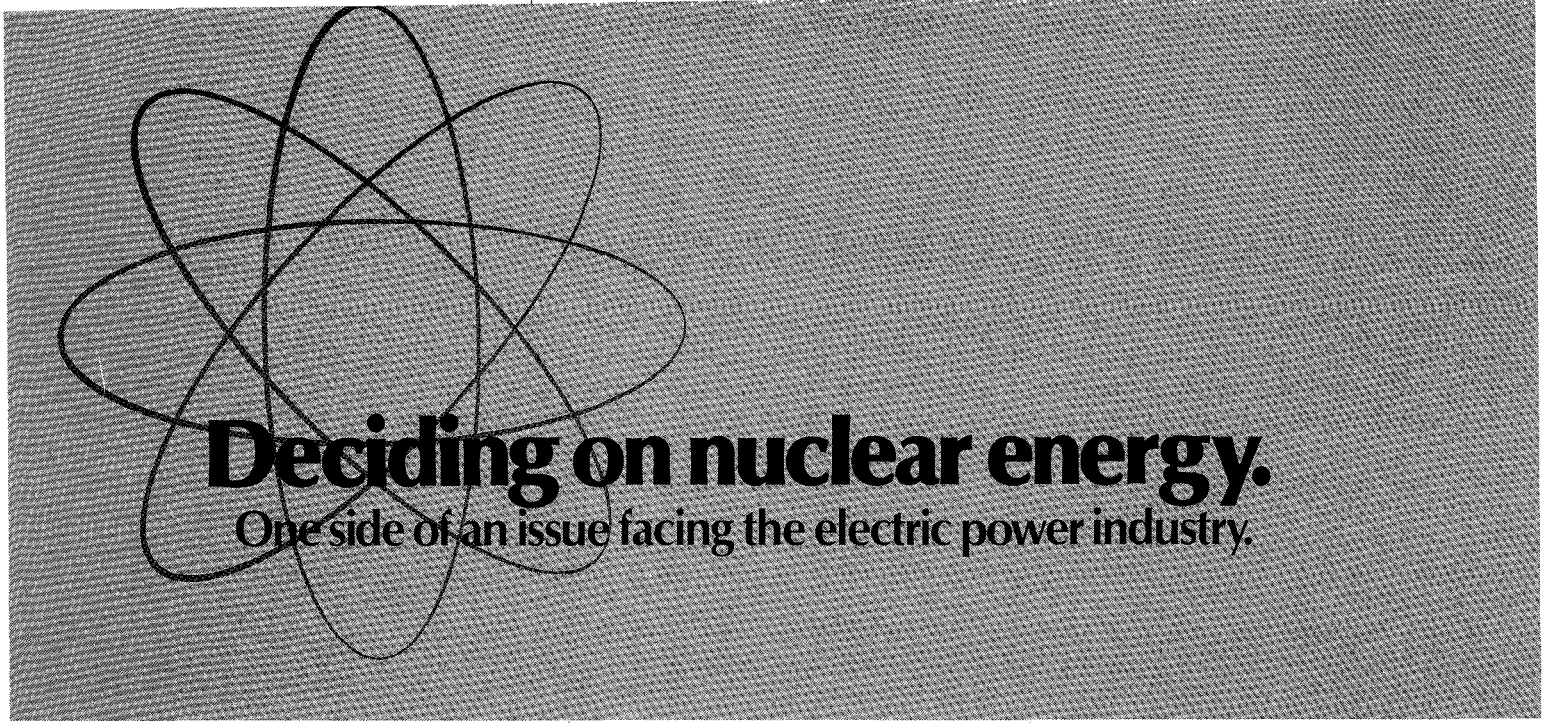

Deciding on nuclear energy.

One side of an issue facing the electric power industry.

Nuclear power is not the energy form of the future. It is very much a part of the present. And important national decisions must be made if it is to continue to make its contribution to energy supply.

Nuclear plants have been generating electricity commercially in the U.S. since 1957. Today, 71 plants provide 12% of this country's electricity—about as much as we get from hydro-electric dams, more than *all* electric power generated in the country in 1946. In some areas, most of the electricity people use is nuclear. 95 more nuclear stations are now under construction. The number of countries with nuclear power programs is now 53.

A clean record

Nuclear generation of electricity has grown because of its safety, reliability and economy. No other industry started with a greater appreciation of potential hazards. None is operated under more stringent occupational and environmental safeguards.

The American Medical Association's Council on Scientific Affairs recently reported that, among the principal fuels available for electricity production over the next 25 years, nuclear power has the lowest adverse impact on health.

The near future

Nuclear power makes economic sense in meeting growing energy demands and in reducing the nation's dependence on oil and gas.

Unless we try to rely entirely on coal production for generation, or to shut down the economy until forms like solar power prove affordable, nuclear power will become increasingly important to the near-term well-being of the country.

Nuclear policy

The electric utility industry agrees with the many expert opinions that ultimate disposal of radioactive wastes presents no insurmountable technical problems. Several acceptable methods are available.

But failure of the federal government to implement available nuclear waste disposal technology is being mistakenly seen as an indication that the nuclear waste issue cannot be resolved.

Recently, we urged the Administration to take advantage of extensive, existing technical and scientific knowledge and to implement a program on a rigid schedule to provide a spent-fuel storage facility and a waste repository at the earliest practical time. These steps are necessary to assure the continued operation of nuclear power plants, to minimize the uncertainty that has been slowing down commitments for future nuclear plants in this country, and to separate the waste disposal issue from the licensing of new power plants.

Congress has divided responsibility for the national waste management program among several agencies of the federal government. The Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency have elements of responsibility.

Now, Congress must provide additional effective legislative guidance for the waste management and spent-fuel storage programs.

The long run

Opinion polls repeatedly show that majorities of the American people support the use of nuclear energy to generate electricity. Where nuclear plants are in operation, the percentages are even higher.

If we are to be able to take advantage of the economic and energy-supply opportunities presented by nuclear energy, both in the near term and the long term, the federal government will need to take responsible action today.

If you would like to read more about nuclear energy as a source of electricity or learn more about the management of high-level radioactive wastes and spent fuel, write to us: Edison Electric Institute, 90 Park Ave., New York, NY 10016. We will be glad to send you more information.

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the party to Libya but returned on a later flight. Coleman said he was calling on Carter's behalf. Asked about the incident, Coleman disclaimed any knowledge and promised to get Billy's comments for us. He did not call back. Senator Russell, the only one of the three on the plane who agreed to talk, said he napped during the flight but was awake for most of it. He denied seeing Billy wearing or displaying any bracelets. When he got to Boston, he said, his luggage was not inspected and, having nothing to declare, he declared nothing. He said he couldn't vouch for Billy.

White House Watch

Twinkles From Beijing

At a press briefing in Washington the day before Teng Hsiao-ping, the senior vice premier and third ranking official of the People's Republic of China, was to arrive, a reporter asked why the "really extraordinary treatment" planned for Teng in Washington and later in Atlanta, Houston and Seattle had been arranged for someone who is "not even a chief of state . . . not even a chief of government." The question was addressed to one of the three briefers who had been left at the official table when the senior briefer, whose abilities include chewing gum without a break while uttering banalities, departed for presumably more serious endeavors. The reporter had loused up a good question by asking whether other visitors such as Leonid Brezhnev would be accorded similar honors. The questioned briefer had been a dedicated advocate of recognition of the PRC and one of that policy's architects. He stared at the reporter and after a moment of contemptuous silence answered in part: "I would draw your attention to a very central fact about this visit which does make it different from other visits. This is the first visit ever to this country by the leadership of a country containing about a quarter of the population of mankind."

Another briefer noted that the PRC leadership had chosen Teng for this visit, the first by a senior Chinese official since Carter and Teng's presumed superior in Peking, Premier and party chairman Hua Kuo-feng, announced the normalization of US-PRC relations on December 15. The same briefer sensibly refused to say whether the choice of Teng indicated to the US government that he is actually Hua's superior and the boss of the PRC. For this observer of the Washington start of the visit, that is all by the way. Teng and his wife, Chou Lin, were marvelous emissaries. They were fun to watch. Teng is short, visibly about five inches shorter than Jimmy Carter, whose official claim to five feet nine inches is doubted by many reporters. Teng's wife is shorter than he is. The faces of both of them were wonderfully alive, intelligent, responsive to what they saw and heard. On television, in the brief glimpses had of him by the press at the White House, in an interview with four network moguls, at a lunch with 11 print reporters and at meetings with congressmen, Teng was a hit. He frowned. He smiled. Mostly in his public moments, he twinkled. Mr. Twinkles from Beijing, I was calling him when he left Washington.

Beijing—there is cause for a brief interruption and explanation. On January 1, we learned with the arrival of Teng and his party, the PRC adopted a departure from the romanization of Chinese names and terms that British imperialists, then the only serious western students and invaders of Chinese culture, had devised in the mid-1800s. The departure is called "pinyin." It decrees that Teng Hsiao-ping shall be Deng Xiaoping—with Deng pronounced dung. His wife Chou Lin becomes Zhuo Lin. All this represents a grievous affront to westerners who had prided themselves upon learning that "t" is "d" and "e" is the short "u"—as in Mao Tse-teng. That doesn't bother me. If they prefer to change Teng Hsiao-ping to Deng Xiaoping that's their business. As a veteran of the John Kennedy-Rusk period when the State Department went along with nationalist Chinese wishes and insisted that Peking was Peiping, I rebel and reject the decree that Peking-Peiping is Beijing. It makes a nice headline. Beyond that, the hell with it.

Apart from political and strategic implications, and we'll get to some of them, the visit surfaced some indications of what our society is and how it works. The Peking Chinese had exposed Presidents Nixon and Ford to elaborate and (to such barbarians as me) stupefying exhibitions of cultural prowess, dramatic and acrobatic. One must assume that the Peking government did not have to lay out large sums for those performances. Somebody here had to, for Teng. The somebodies here were an association promoting US-Chinese trade, which put up $250,000 to finance a gala presentation of US arts, and the Atlantic Richfield Corporation in the person of its chairman, Robert Anderson, which ponied up $500,000 to pay for broadcasting the performance. It was a great show and I enjoyed every minute of it on Public Broadcasting television. Anderson got brief thanks and a picture of himself on the tube at the end. The thought of all those bucks from manifestly interested donors and the sight of Teng and Jimmy Carter in the presidential box and on the stage at Kennedy Center, sucking up the applause, sort of put me off.

Carter's invitations to Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford to attend the state dinner for Teng and his party puzzled and offended many people. The invitation to Nixon was gutsy and right. He launched serious discussion of accommodation with the PRC in a *Foreign*

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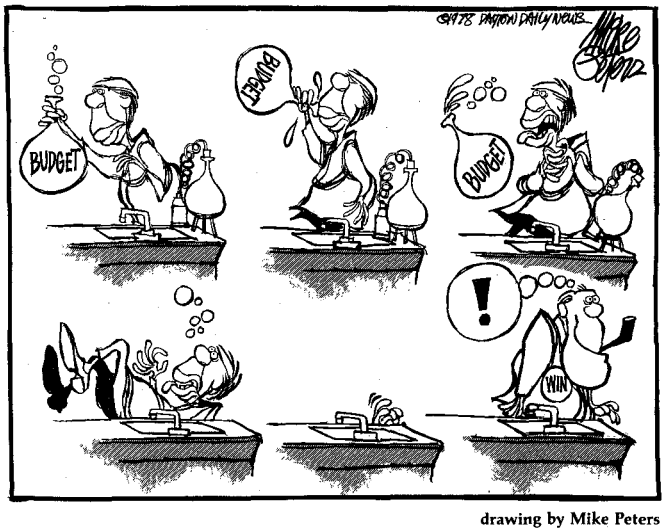
Affairs article in 1967. He set Henry Kissinger to work on it in 1969 and he and Kissinger got it moving with their visit to Peking in 1972. Nixon, disgraced as he was, behaved well when he returned to the White House for the dinner. He spared Carter any extended greeting in the televised receiving line, accepted Teng's warm two-handed shake with due gratitude, and at the dinner table (I'm told) made himself welcome and interesting. During his visit he did a thing for which I shall always be grateful. It was for a friend of his and mine to whom three Republican presidents—Eisenhower, Nixon and Ford—were and are indebted. Bryce N. Harlow, their staff adviser and congressional lobbyist, was ill at a Virginia hospital near Washington when Nixon called him from California and said he wanted to see him on this visit. Harlow said he wasn't up to it. Nixon persisted and spent 30 minutes with Harlow around noon of January 30. Excepting Nicholas Ruwe and Stephen Bull, two Nixon-time subordinates who managed the details of the visit, Nixon saw little of his old associates in Washington. Bryce Harlow's voice was thin and ghostly when he said he wasn't able to see Nixon. It was brisk, happy, *up* after Nixon visited him. "It shows these people here," Harlow said in his joking sardonic tone, "that I'm still somebody." He sure is.

Late on Saturday, January 13, national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski telephoned Gerald Ford at his home in Rancho Mirage, that appropriately named extension of Palm Springs in California, and invited him and Betty Ford to attend the dinner for Teng. The Fords were to leave Monday the 15th, for a long-planned visit to eight countries in and around the Middle East. According to Ford and his chief assistant, Robert Barrett, Ford said it would be difficult to make the dinner because of the impending trip but he'd think it over. Ford called Brzezinksi on Sunday the 14th and declined. He said that they could make the dinner only if they cancelled or cut short their last engagement, a day and a half with King Hussein of Jordan in Amman, the climax of their trip. Even if they did that they would arrive in Washington a few hours before the dinner, exhausted after a long flight. Betty Ford's health was good but the strain might be too much for her.

Two oddities followed. Rosalynn Carter's press staff was told immediately that the Fords had declined and never pretended they hadn't. The presidential staff maintained until just before the dinner that Ford might attend, with or without Mrs. Ford. The other oddity is that, according to Bob Barrett, the Fords and their party rested overnight Sunday the 28th at Shannon, Ireland, after leaving Amman. They returned to California by way of Omaha on the Monday of the dinner overflying the East Coast and Washington. They could have flown to Washington in ample time for the dinner. One must agree with several of Ford's former associates and White House subordinates that he did well to use the trip as an excuse to duck appearance at the Teng dinner with Richard Nixon. One of Ford's standard replies to questions lately has been that Nixon ought to stay home in San Clemente, out of public sight and notice, for the good of the Republican party and of its 1980 nominee. The nominee just might be Ford.

Two of the many questions of substance raised by the Teng visit will be noted in the remainder of this report. One is Taiwan. The other is the PRC's view of its and the US's relationship with the Soviet Union. Agreements on technological and cultural relationships were signed with great fanfare at the end of Teng's visit. They are of substance, too. But they were negotiated months ago and put the working gloss on a visit that was essentially symbolic.

Teng correctly said, over and over, that his remarks about the Soviet threat to world stability and peace should not have surprised anyone. During the Kissinger, Nixon and Ford visits to Peking in and after 1972, PRC officials in statements and toasts repeatedly declared their conviction that the Soviet Union presented a threat to China and to world peace and that the US did not fully recognize the threat. Nixon, Ford, Kissinger and now Carter and Brzezinski have played "the China card" as a counterweight to Soviet influence, with differing degrees of emphasis and frankness. In a *Time* interview in Peking before he left for the US, and on three occasions in Washington, Teng said with a bluntness unusual even for his fellows and predecessors that the US, China, Japan, western Europe must unite "to deal with Soviet hegemonism"—meaning Soviet domination. He was asked at a luncheon with reporters whether Carter shared this view. Teng answered: "Of course we each have our own views, but on this point of combating hegemonism there is a shared view." There is, as a matter of fact, but Carter and his spokesmen don't put it so baldly. A statement handed out to the press before Carter's final meeting with Teng had the President saying: "We have agreed to consult regularly on matters of common global interest." Somebody inserted after this line and



drawing by Mike Peters

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Carter said at the meeting: "The security concerns of the United States do not coincide completely, of course, with those of China, nor does China share our responsibilities."

Three official statements about the future prospects and security of the de-recognized Republic of China on Taiwan speak for themselves. President Carter said at a press conference before Teng arrived in the US that he had sought and failed to obtain an explicit guarantee that the PRC would not try to conquer Taiwan by force. A US official at the pre-Teng briefing mentioned at the start of this report said what American spokesmen have said again and again and what the record verifies: "The President would not have moved to normalize relations with the PRC were he not confident that such an action would enhance the chances of a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue. . . . It was clear from the outset, and for many years, that an explicit commitment not to use force was not something that could be obtained." In a television network interview on January 31, Vice Premier Teng said: "And now the question is, if we are to commit ourselves to not using armed force at all, that would be equivalent to tying of our own hands. The result then would be to have the Taiwan authorities absolutely refuse to negotiate with us for a peaceful reunification and (my emphasis) *that could only lead in the end to an armed solution of the problem.*"

I applauded the Nixon-Kissinger move in 1972 toward recognition of the PRC and de-recognition of the Republic of China on Taiwan. I applauded the culmination that Carter announced on December 15. But I never kidded myself, as some of Carter's people and maybe Carter kid or pretend to kid themselves, that normalization can be completed without the absorption of anti-Communist Taiwan into Communist China.

John Osborne

Eulogies for a liberal Republican.

Rocky as St. Sebastian

One expects to hear a lot of pious nonsense upon the death of a public figure, so the tributes paid when Nelson Rockefeller died were no surprise. "He was an activist, a doer, a repository of great political energy, very much alive, very quick, always ready to go," gushed *The Washington Post*. "Nelson Rockefeller was a big man." *Time* magazine, long a Rockefeller puff sheet, said, "He was driven by a mission to serve, improve and uplift his country. . . . He had a zest for life and for politics that no amount of money can buy." And *The New York Times*, an editorial bulwark for 20 years, praised Rockefeller for "an extraordinary standard of concern and effort in the service of the country, New York State and his family."

The eulogists duly noted the ironies of his career, chiefly that this man who had everything couldn't buy the thing he wanted most—the White House. More ironic still, in the view of some, was that this grandson of a robber baron had sacrificed his ambition to principle. His embrace of the liberal vision, so the story goes, doomed him to defeat after defeat at the hands of his party's reactionary elements. Said the *Times*: "He tried periodically to play the hard-hearted scourge of criminals and other easy targets, but he lacked the hypocrisy he would have needed to pay his party's price of nomination. For a critical decade, he was the Republicans' real alternative to Richard Nixon, and he went down defiantly, serene in his choice of values."

But casting Nelson Rockefeller in the role of St. Sebastian requires a rather cavalier disregard for the facts. The strangest irony is the loyalty of some American people and institutions that like to think of themselves as liberal to a politician whose instincts and record were so plainly illiberal. Many remember warmly the incident at the 1964 Republican convention, when Rockefeller stood alone before a frenzied mob of Goldwater delegates, receiving their thunderous boos with a smirk and a taunting rejoinder: "This is still a free country, ladies and gentlemen." Liberal Republicanism's greatest moment.

There wasn't much in Rockefeller's career to justify his glorification. Even his campaign against Goldwater in 1964—in itself one of the nastier smear efforts in recent political history—turned on pragmatic considerations, not philosophical ones. As heir to the mantle of Wilkie and Dewey, Rockefeller wanted to consolidate the moderate-to-liberal eastern Republicans behind him to beat down the conservatives of the South and West—a strategy that had worked for every GOP nominee since 1940, and one that Rockefeller had no way of knowing was obsolete. Had he known, Rockefeller might have behaved differently.

On matters of foreign policy, Rockefeller's views never differed much from Goldwater's. What the *Times* referred to as his "enlightened internationalism" was actually nothing more than a fervent belief that the US should act aggressively whenever events abroad threatened its own interests—ideological, economic or military. This concern grew naturally out of his family's extensive business interests abroad. Rockefeller's celebrated interest in Latin American affairs, after all, had originated in his desire to promote the expansion of the Rockefeller oil interests. (He has been one of the most hated men in Latin America for years, but he was surprised at the riots that greeted his 1969 tour there for President Nixon.)

One of the particulars in Rockefeller's indictment of

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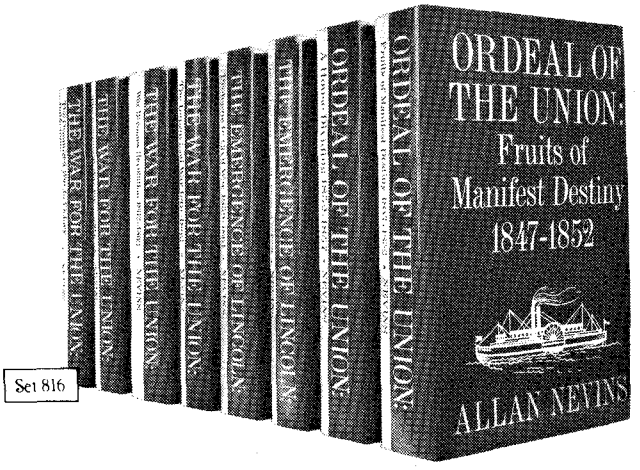

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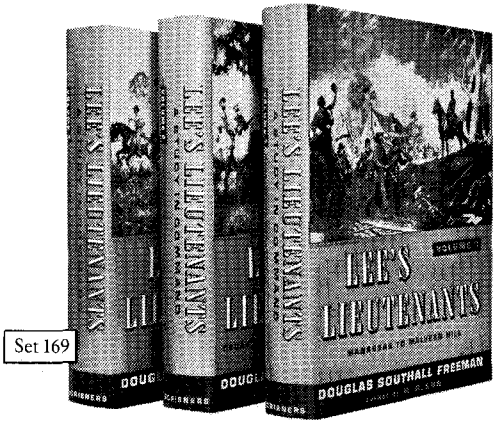

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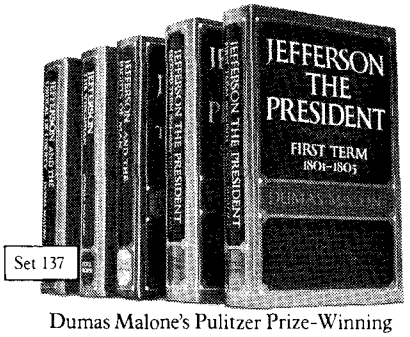

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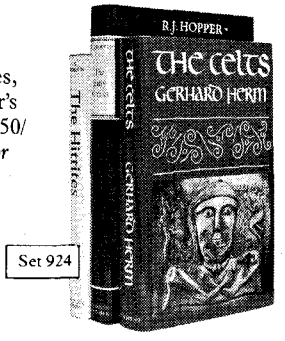

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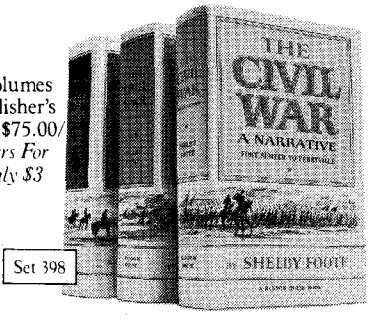

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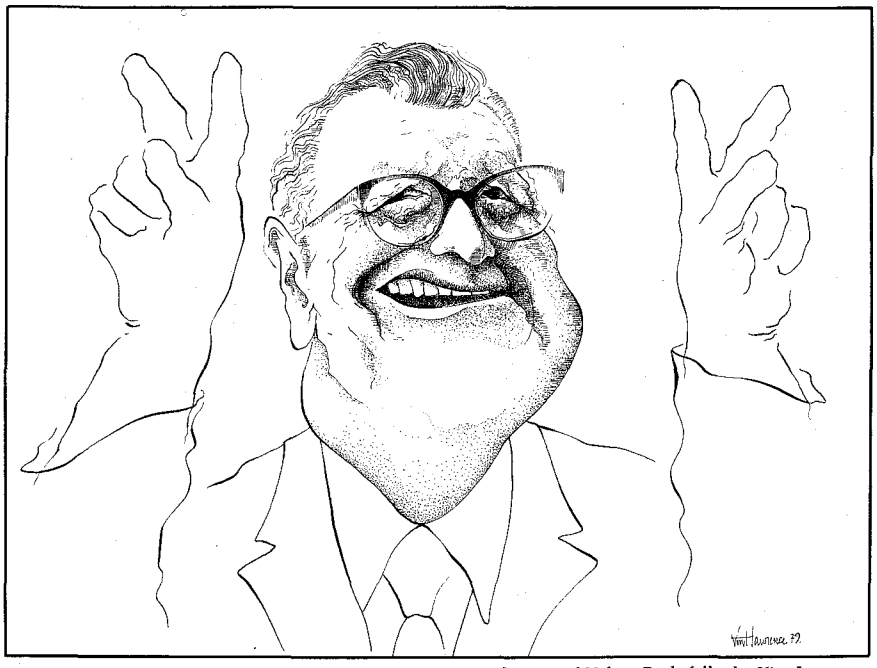
Goldwater as an "extremist" was his proposal to use tactical nuclear weapons in Vietnam. But in 1957 a study financed by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and supervised by Nelson and his protégé Henry Kissinger had recommended using tactical nuclear weapons in small-scale wars. During his abortive campaign for the presidential nomination in 1960, Rockefeller, like John Kennedy, lambasted the Eisenhower administration for a "dangerous missile gap" and demanded a five billion dollar increase in the defense budget (this at a time when the entire defense budget was only $44 billion). Even President Kennedy's cold war bombast and increased military spending weren't enough to satisfy Rockefeller. Grudgingly endorsing the Test Ban Treaty, he took pains to insist that "we must at all times be prepared, able and willing to use nuclear weapons to repel aggression, alone or with our allies." He supported the Vietnam war effort through four administrations—only briefly offering a complicated "peace plan" during his 1968 presidential race to try to set himself apart from Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. As late as 1975 Rockefeller called for increased assistance to President Thieu. Rockefeller later said he supported the war only to ensure continued federal aid to the state of New York.



drawing of Nelson Rockefeller by Vint Lawrence

Russell Kirk once remarked that Eisenhower wasn't a conservative, he was a golfer. It could be said of Rockefeller that he wasn't a liberal; he was a spender. No state governor in US history was more dedicated to squandering the public's money than Governor Rockefeller. He indulged his taste for extravagance in many ways, but primarily by erecting new buildings. The Albany mall complex, begun in his first term at a projected cost of $250 million and completed in his last at a final cost of $1.2 billion, is only the most notorious example. He built housing units, college buildings, sewage treatment plants and, perhaps most important of all, highways. At one point Rockefeller bragged that the state had built four and a half miles of highways for every day he was in office. He avoided having to ask voter approval for many of these construction projects by setting up semi-autonomous agencies which issued their own bonds and used their income to service the debt. By his last year, these agencies had accumulated $10 billion in debts, requiring $50 million a year just to pay the interest. One of them, the Urban Development Corporation, defaulted on $100 million in notes in 1975. During the Rockefeller years, the average New Yorker's taxes multiplied nearly five times over; the state budget quadrupled; the state debt rose 400 percent.

Rockefeller deserves no awards for sensitivity to civil liberties either. Early in his governorship he pushed through a "stop-and-frisk" law to allow police to search almost anyone they wanted. Later he proposed a "no-knock" bill to let them dispense with the inconvenience of announcing themselves before barging into private homes. As he grew older, hoping desperately for a chance to succeed Nixon in the White House, Rockefeller showed himself eager to pander to the crudest right-wing impulses. At one point he suggested the death penalty for selling heroin; later he ramrodded a bill through the legislature requiring mandatory life sentences instead. He took to denouncing "welfare chiselers" in stump speeches, he reduced benefits and he imposed a residency requirement on recipients, even though such requirements had been ruled unconstitutional. As if to dramatize his new toughness, he ended the 1971 inmate rebellion at the Attica state prison by ordering an all-out police assault which left 43 dead, including 10 hostages killed by police gunfire. A special state commission later rebuked Rockefeller for his handling of the crisis, but he never confessed any second thoughts. Attica no doubt was what the *Times* had in mind when it mentioned his vain efforts to

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masquerade as a "hard-hearted scourge of criminals."

So what was Rocky's legacy? He left his state's affairs a mess, its biggest city bankrupt, its programs overextended and badly run, its citizens burdened with frightful debts that will not be paid off for decades. He left the GOP's liberal wing decimated and feeble. Rockefeller's admirers during his lifetime, and his eulogists, were dazzled by his personality and his wealth. That's why there was so much blather last week about his "zest for life" and so little talk about his record.

Stephen Chapman

The boat people are an easy case. How will we handle a tough one?

The Moral Problem of Refugees

by Michael Walzer

About one group of refugees, there can be no question. The boat people of Vietnam are our responsibility. The thousands who are now on the water, the thousands more interned in Hong Kong and on the Malaysian island of Pulau Bidong, the tens of thousands who are yet to come: all these should be taken in by the United States. They should be taken in quickly and ungrudgingly, before any more of the ancient fishing boats and rotting freighters on which they have made their escape sink in the South Seas.

But this is not the official American view. On the contrary, Under Secretary of State David Newsome argued at a recent Geneva conference, "the present wave of refugees" is not connected with the Vietnam war and so is not an American but "an international problem." The argument is both callous and dishonest. It would have been closer to the truth to claim that the war would have produced a mass of refugees even had the US never intervened. After every civil war and revolution, the losers, or some of them, believing themselves hopelessly compromised in the eyes of the new regime, will choose political exile. In this case, the harshness of the new regime guarantees that the number of people making that choice will not be small. Still, *these* people in their thousands and tens of thousands are *our* Vietnamese. They are men and women who worked with us, directly as employees in the vast American military establishment, or indirectly as officials and officers in the American-supported government and army of South Vietnam. Or, more generally, they are men and women who shaped their lives to the contours of the American presence—as merchants, journalists, doctors, nurses, smugglers, prostitutes and so on.

American officials on the scene have attempted to classify the refugees, dividing them into four categories: those with family members already in the US, former US employees, high-ranking bureaucrats and soldiers (who might be at risk if they went home) and "all others." This suggests some acceptance of responsibility, at least for the first three categories. But I want to insist that the "others" are ours too. The American involvement was so long, its scale was so huge, it touched so many aspects of Vietnamese life, that it just isn't possible to sort out the refugees now. If they flee with images of California dancing in their heads, that is enough. Who put those images there?

Great powers, both when they act greatly and when they act in other ways, cannot avoid incurring obligations of this sort. And great powers fulfill their obligations. Fulfillment in this case seems virtually costless: a few hundred thousand more Vietnamese, easily absorbed, strong immigrants and (though a few of them probably will be right-wing fanatics) good citizens—like the Hungarians and Cubans before them. They will pay us back in lives for the lives we took, and the lives we lost, in their country. It is a moral bargain. To haggle over their numbers seems incredibly small-minded. And to palm them off as an "international problem" behind a barrage of human rights talk and diplomatic maneuver is far worse.

Hospitality for the Vietnamese is so obviously necessary that it hardly requires elaborate argument. A short, sharp editorial, followed by letters, petitions, meetings, would be more to the point. But the boat people ought to remind us of other people, uprooted, homeless, exiled men and women, driven like the Vietnamese by fear and desperate hope, unwelcome wherever they go: it is an experience in which our age has not been poor. We can be certain that there will be more refugees, of every imaginable political persuasion and religious faith. And our own duty won't always be

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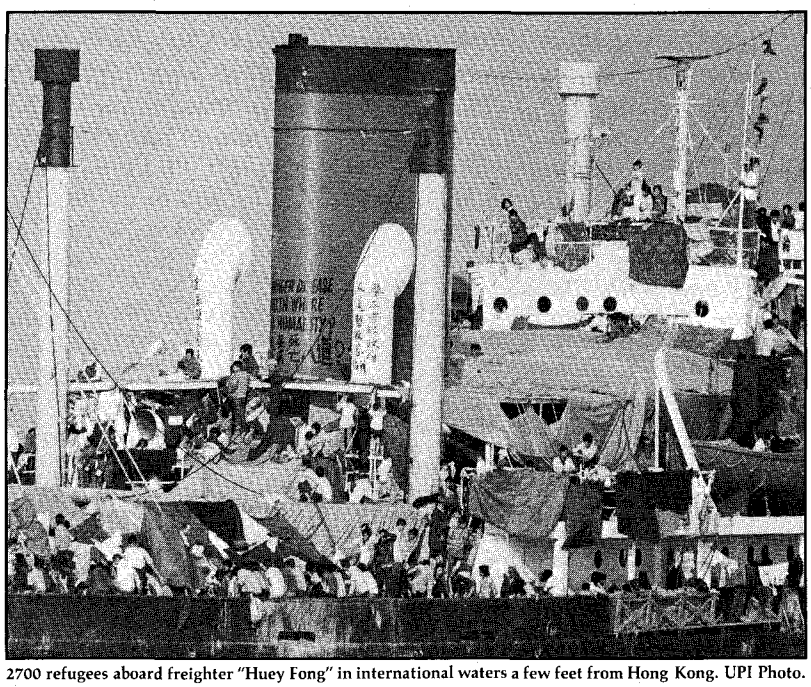
as clear as it is right now. Most of them will be seeking an escape from domestic upheavals with which foreign powers, even great powers, have had little to do. How will we, how should we, respond to them?

There are hard questions here, which can't be answered simply by invoking the inscription on the Statue of Liberty. We have not acted in the spirit of Emma Lazarus's poem for a long time, not since the 1920s. We continue to take people in, but we pick and choose now, often on arbitrary or racist grounds, and the numbers are strictly limited. (I won't write here about illegal immigrants, whose motives are mostly economic, but only about political refugees.) The yearning to breathe free is not today a ticket of admission to the United States—or, for that matter, to any other country of the new or the old world. If it was, how many people would come? The potential numbers seem frighteningly large. Americans no longer have the sense of empty spaces and endless growth that underlay our old immigration policy. States and towns even try to keep out internal migrants; they are unlikely to be more hospitable to foreigners. "Small is beautiful," whatever its merits, is an ideology of exclusion, and the sensitivity it expresses is increasingly widespread.



2700 refugees aboard freighter "Huey Fong" in international waters a few feet from Hong Kong. UPI Photo.

And yet it is hard to shake off the old idea that liberal societies ought to be open to men and women fleeing from tyranny and persecution (whether or not they are themselves liberals). Where else can they find refuge? Where else can they breathe, let alone breathe free?

Great Britain has recently been through an extraordinary debate about these questions, set off by the publication of Nikolai Tolstoy's *The Secret Betrayal: 1944-1947* (published in the US by Scribner's). Tolstoy's story is worth a brief retelling, for the US is involved in it too, and it poses with harrowing clarity issues that we still confront. More than two million Russians, most of them captured or enslaved by the Nazis, some of them willing allies of the German army, were living in the territories overrun by British and American forces in the final offensives of World War II. Captured again (not, by any means, liberated), these people were interned and then, at the insistence of the Soviet government, systematically shipped back to Russia or to Russian occupied territory in eastern Europe. Politically, they were a motley group: the greater number by far were political innocents, swept up by wars and revolutions over which they had no control, victims of the 20th century. Some of them were old anti-communists, some were right-wing nationalists (Ukrainians, Cossacks, mountain peoples of the Caucasus), some were faithful, if doddering, czarists. All of them, according to the numbing but utterly believable testimony that Tolstoy has collected, were killed or sent off to prison camps immediately upon their return.

Many of these Russians, expecting nothing else from the Stalinist regime, sought by every possible means to remain in the West. They pleaded for asylum; fled the camps; fought the soldiers, mostly British, who drove them onto ships and trains. There was a large number of suicides. The use of force against these people, concealed at the time, was justified by "higher" political considerations, having to do largely with Anglo-Russian diplomacy. (The behavior of the Americans, who had fewer Russians to deal with, was marginally better: our "roundups" were conducted with greater reluctance and less efficiency. There was also considerable resistance among British soldiers to the task their government set them, and some connivance at escape.) I can't deal with the diplomatic questions here, though Anthony Eden's determination to appease Stalin, at least on this point which seemed to him an easy point, was obviously a critical factor. But why did it seem so easy? One reason is suggested by Eden's first reaction to the capture of Russian POWs in France: "If these men don't go back to Russia, where are they to go? We don't want them here."

We don't want them here. That was exactly the response of US State Department officials to the plight of Europe's Jews, the boat people of the 1940s. Today, we look back with shame on that time, as the British do too, after reading Tolstoy's book. How can the leaders of a liberal society (and of a "free world") talk like that about men and women who have literally no place else to go? At the same time, one has to ask: how many such refugees is a country like Britain bound to take in? At what cost to its cultural homogeneity, political stability, economic well-being? The Russians of 1944-1947 asked for asylum, but the old right of asylum was worked out to accommodate much smaller groups of men and

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women: heretical religious congregations, independent writers and artists, bands of political oppositionists. These days, the number of victims or potential victims is much larger than those terms suggest, and the idea of asylum is stretched almost to the breaking point.

What is strange about the idea when it is stretched is this: the principle of asylum seems to mean that the obligations of liberal countries are set by the brutality of illiberal countries. The greater the brutality, the greater the obligation. The more people are persecuted, the more refugees must be taken in. That sounds odd, perhaps, though I don't think it is all that uncommon in everyday moral life. In time of tyranny and persecution at home, for example, men and women with liberal values must accept certain burdens of action and even, sometimes, of risk. The same thing is true of countries in international society. There are, of course, limits to those burdens, but I confess that I don't know how to specify the limits. At some point, I suppose, governments can say no, thinking of their own people and the integrity of their own societies. But surely we are still far from that point. For us, for now, countries that claim to defend liberal values must offer refuge to the victims of countries that violate those values—because that is what it means to defend liberal values.

Perhaps there is a more general principle at stake here, which might best be expressed in the by now familiar, if somewhat tarnished, language of human rights. Every human being has a right to a place in the world where he can live safely or relatively safely—first of all, a right to live safely where he is (wherever he is) and then, if that right is violated, a right to live safely somewhere else. These are rights that individuals hold against their own states and then against the society of states. Understood in this way, the problem is indeed international in scope, and it makes sense to try to work out some agreement to share the burdens of refugee reception. The agreement would have to be made in general terms: none of the countries involved could know or should want to know what the skin color of the next group of refugees will be, or what their religious or political convictions will be.

In extreme cases, when millions of men and women are forced to flee the rule of a barbaric government, the society of states or any single state might do best to intervene, overthrow that government, and enable the refugees to return—as the Indians did in Bangladesh. Most often, however, it will be neither possible nor desirable to intervene. There will be nothing to do but find room for the refugees. And then there must be procedures for making sure that room is actually found. Is it too much to ask that the US, in memory of the Statue of Liberty and the country for which it stood, should take the lead in developing such procedures?

Before we can do that, however, we must first find room among ourselves for the boat people of Vietnam.

Disadvantages of the cult of the personality.

Sam Brown at Action

by Robert Howard

A prominent Massachusetts liberal was describing the role of Sam Brown, present director of Action, at the 1976 Democratic Platform Committee debate on amnesty for Vietnam draft-evaders and deserters. "I'm very fond of Sam," he sighed, "but the Carter forces were in total control except on the amnesty vote. Sam stood up after the vote, made a little speech about compromise, and just gave away the victory . . . *after* we won! I went along with it, but to this day, I hate myself for not screaming."

Sam Brown has a way of using his personality as an instrument of political persuasion. He is genial and charismatic, so likeable that disagreements are diffused, lost behind the encounter with the man. Journalists, politicians and bureaucrats at Action, the federal umbrella agency for the Peace Corps and other volunteer programs, have described this experience. "It is difficult to sit and listen to him for more than a few minutes without becoming convinced that yes, he is right, that here is a man who knows what he is talking about."

Washington is full of such men with strong presences used for political ends. What is special about Brown is that this presence has inspired a peculiar fixation with

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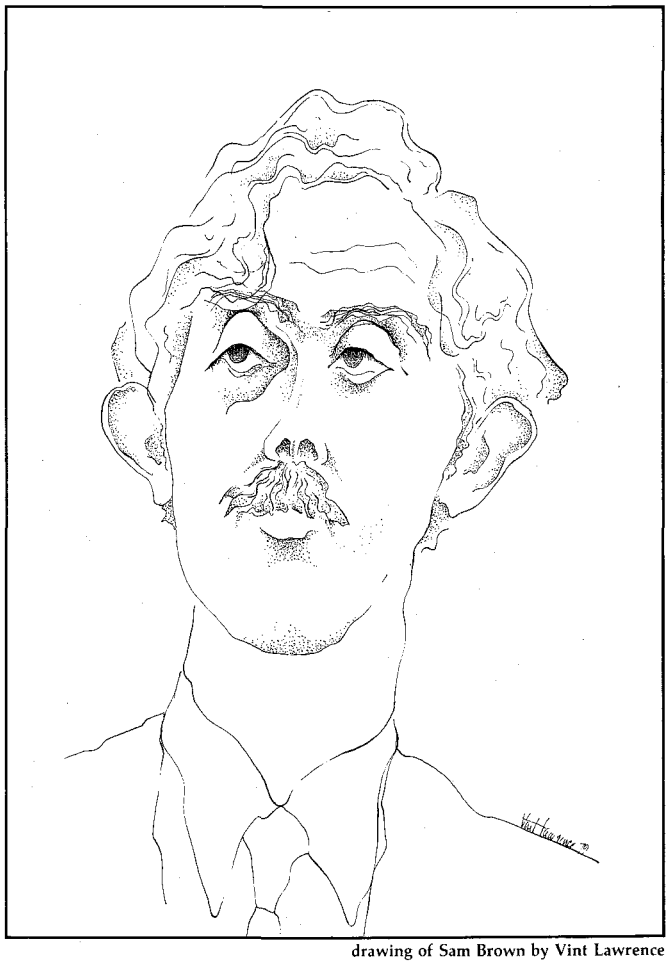
his public image on the part of the Washington press. While most objects of press scrutiny come to the capital looking to create such an image, Brown's was ready-made. He was the "radical in pin-stripe suits," the anti-war activist who chose to work within the system. The left greeted his appointment with high expectations—a ray of hope amidst the cloudy uncertainties of the Carter administration. The right saw him as an ogre—Brown received top billing in a Heritage Foundation report, "The New Left in Government: From Protest to Policy-Making"—and this only served to cement him more firmly in his role. Brown's appointment took on the dimensions of a cultural event. For Mary McGrory, it embodied the end of the domestic divisions caused by the Vietnam war.

The apotheosis of Sam Brown into the main character in a 1970s morality play has had dangerous consequences. The obsession with Brown's image (an obsession he has neither cultivated nor sufficiently fought) has obscured the important political content of his work to revitalize Action. Now, when a conservative attack on his policies seems imminent and the Sam Brown media profiles have turned sour, he is politically isolated, learning perhaps too late the pitfalls of personality politics.

Brown took over Action after eight years of Republican neglect. The Ford administration had planned a zero-dollar appropriation for Vista, Action's domestic volunteer program, in fiscal year 1978. (The OMB later added eight million dollars to finance the dismantling of the agency.) The substance of the programs also had degenerated with a tendency to move away from their original anti-poverty focus. Some Vista volunteers did not really work for the poor at all; they worked instead in libraries or on local Bicentennial commissions. Many others had jobs such as working as paralegals on a state civil rights commission. Few worked directly with the poor.

Brown has tried to return the agency to its earlier emphasis. This has meant a move away from what is called "direct services" and toward community organizing. "Instead of running a day-care center for the poor, we want volunteers to help people organize their own," Brown said. The goal is to create local structures that will help poor people to define their needs and make demands on public agencies to meet them. The embodiment of this philosophy has been the controversial National Grants program, where Vista volunteers are trained by grass-roots community groups such as Acorn, a New Orleans community organizing group, and Chicago's Midwest Academy, in the techniques of community organizing. In the Peace Corps, the emphasis has been less on direct work for governments of developing countries (including the teaching of English to local elites) and more on projects that meet "basic human needs"—nutrition, heath care, food production—of the poorest of the poor.

Even most of Brown's critics within the agency recognize that these changes are an immense improvement. Brown has brought into Action some young politicians whose training has been in grass-roots community organizing and who, according to one Brown aide, "aren't wed to the answers of the 1960s that didn't work." But the problem they face is very similar to that faced in the early days of the war on poverty. To the degree that their initiatives are successful, especially on the domestic side, they will certainly draw criticism from the very power groups they threaten. This is, if anything, more true in the inhospitable political climate of the 1970s and in an administration whose commitment to confronting the persistence of poverty is suspect. Brown's major dilemma involves the delicate mechanics of implementation.



drawing of Sam Brown by Vint Lawrence

In an effort to avoid criticism, Brown has tried to "carry the message" by the sheer weight of his own personality, but the strategy hasn't worked. The criticism has come anyway. And the crucial questions of implementation have been lost in the vortex of attention that swirls around the image of Sam Brown.

Two current controversies illustrate how the substantive issues have been blurred. Brown's firing of former Peace Corps director Carolyn Payton last December was caused by important key policy differences. Brown has attempted to reevaluate traditional Peace Corps programs in the light of the continuing debate on how economic development

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works. For Brown, the proper role of the Peace Corps volunteer is as a "development worker," trained to meet the most urgent needs of poor countries. One program he has criticized is TEFL, the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language: more than half the time, volunteers were teaching English to students as a *second* foreign language (usually in former French colonies of North and West Africa), and this in countries where many citizens can't read or write in their own native language. Where the overall literacy rate is so low, Brown said, teaching English to the elite "is not a fundamental task of development." During his two years as Action director, Brown has shifted volunteers from the central cities to rural areas. He also has suggested that the Peace Corps concentrate on the poorest countries (the first volunteers will soon arrive in Bangladesh) rather than the more developed members of the third world (for example, South Korea).

Carolyn Payton seems to have shared Brown's general desire to revitalize the Peace Corps. Both supported a return to the recruiting of "generalist" volunteers rather than the technical specialists the Peace Corps has sought in recent years. But Brown came to see Payton as too attached to the style of the 1960s, essentially unwilling to take a critical look at the traditional way of doing things. "Carolyn felt, 'What we're doing already is fine; we just need more money,'" Brown said. "She was all for going into any countries that asked," an Action aide said, "and doing whatever they asked us to do. If Chile wanted a baseball coach, Carolyn would send them a baseball coach."

There is a serious policy disagreement here but it has passed virtually unmentioned in the reports of the Brown-Payton confrontation. Payton resolutely denies that Brown ever identified the differences between them. In a front-page story in *The Wall Street Journal*, she offered a step-by-step account of her "purge," portraying Brown as a hot-headed dictator out to crush anyone opposed to his "crackpot ideas." Payton has astutely played both sides of the Sam Brown image game. She has fed the conventional conservative suspicion of a new left politicization of the Peace Corps, and at the same time she has suggested that racial and sexual biases were behind her dismissal. "I don't know why he fired me," she said." It may have to do with my age, my being female or my being black. I don't know." Brown is trapped between these accusations by the very language and style he has cultivated. And the press, true to form, has focused on this dimension of the firing so that the policy issues that motivated it have been ignored.

A less dramatic but probably more serious controversy surrounds a highly critical congressional investiga-

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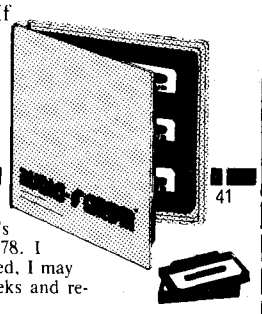

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tion of Action. In the last days of 1978 Robert Michel, the House minority whip and member of the Appropriations Committee, released a draft report by the permanent investigative staff of the Appropriations Committee, criticizing Action's hiring practices, grant programs and fiscal management. According to Michel, the report "has confirmed the existence of widespread mismanagement and a blatant disregard for the agency's mission by senior executives." What is closer to the truth is that Michel, whose antipathy for the Action director has been apparent for a long time, has mounted an attack on the substance of Brown's programs by the device of labeling Brown an incompetent and dishonest administrator.

A close look at the report in no way supports Michel's summary of it. Congressional staffers who have seen it find it not particularly unusual. "Some of the criticisms are serious, but it's not much different from most other oversight reports," one reader said. Nor is the report itself a fair summary of Brown's tenure at Action. The most serious accusations are grossly overstated, the result of either unfair criteria of evaluation or generalizations from isolated incidents. For example, Brown is accused of increasing the number of senior management positions by 30 percent since September 1976. This is true as far as it goes, but what the report fails to mention are the widespread personnel reductions in the last years of the Ford administration. When present staff levals are compared to those of 1972, the numbers are about equal.

The report also intimates "widespread local problems" in the National Grants program, including inadequate training and illegal misuse of volunteers (involvement in political lobbying and union organizing). In fact, only four such cases out of the 270 local projects receiving volunteers under the National Grant program are cited by the investigators. Three of them concern one grant recipient—Acorn's Community Organization Research Action Project (which no longer participates in the program)—and all three originally were uncovered by Action's own monitoring procedures.

Finally, while the investigators uncover some weaknesses in various agency administrative systems, their findings suggest no more than the opportunity for organizational improvement, and hardly the "flagrant" and "blatant" violations that Michel has announced with so much fanfare. Action's response to the report, not yet released, claims that the report "contains *no* findings of ethical violations, fraudulent use of funds, intentional illegality or other similar charges."

The obvious purpose of Michel's report is to attack the National Grants program. Michel terms it "a national disgrace," but what he objects to is the very idea of federally sponsored community organizing. Because organizing means building coalitions, Action is accused of disregarding its mission to serve "those stricken by poverty" (an ironic charge given Republican efforts to blunt the anti-poverty edge of the agency under Nixon and Ford). Action aid to community groups fighting the deterioration of lower-middle-class neighborhoods is cited as an example. Because a certain view of American society denies the existence of the working poor, any project dealing with occupational groups—working women, farm workers—is similarly criticized. The guiding philosophy behind the report and Michel's interpretation of it seems strikingly similar to the rationale behind Nixon's creation of Action as a separate agency in the first place: the poor are a group apart, to be aided only on the condition that their problems and demands do not spill over into other areas of society and impinge upon other social groups.

Biased as it is, the Appropriations Committee draft report puts Brown in a difficult position. Michel may lose the legal argument, but so far he has won political points. In challenging Brown's skill and competence as an administrator, he has succeeded in controlling the parameters of the debate. As in the entire discussion surrounding Action since he became director, Sam Brown's personality takes precedence over the political issues.

By now Brown is familiar with the trap; he wants to shift the argument back. "The real question is: how do you most effectively deal with poverty in this society?" But Brown's role as "symbol" of the left makes it especially difficult for him to be an effective "spokesman" for its programs. Because of this, he has been unable to communicate a concrete program for fighting poverty in the late 1970s and Action's role in that fight. Many people believe Brown should be more aggressive. According to the Action counsel, Harry MacLean, "a lot of people told him to lay low at the beginning, duck the criticism. Sam ended up dancing around a lot of groups—Congress, community organizations, women's groups—and finally taking heat from all of them. He should have fought." But it is hard to imagine a more aggressive performance escaping the personality focus of the "radical in government" scenario. Whatever its political clarity, an aggressive response to critics would be no closer to resolving the problems of implementation.

The biggest obstacle to Brown and the generation of politicians he has brought into Action is their political and institutional isolation, an isolation that has plagued Action since the Nixon-Ford years. The only way out of the trap of personality politics is to build networks of support for specific programs. Brown's real error is his failure to create constituencies for his new ideas among those community organizations he most wants to serve and in the Action bureaucracy itself. "If Action can be faulted," said Lee Webb, director of the National Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, "it's for not having formed an active and strong popular constituency behind Sam's programs. That's exactly

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what every other federal agency and program does." Now, when Brown needs political support the most, the lines of mutual dependence are not there.

Brown also has broken the first rule of bureaucratic politics. He has not succeeded in winning over the middle-level civil servants in the agency. Part of the problem is the nature of the agency itself. Action has a history of politically oriented leadership. Brown, like other directors, has spent much of his time introducing new organizational systems. Many administrative improvements have been made (computerized budget and recruitment systems, a work improvement program which, according to employee union head Vic Basile, "isn't very visible but has come a long way"), but the major goal of redistributing power and responsibility within the agency has bogged down. The impression among Action bureaucrats is that Brown has promised more than he has delivered. A legendary memo of August 22, 1977, entitled "Let's Get Started," called for the removal of "traditional boundaries between management and employees." "That just hasn't developed," Basile said. "Employees don't feel they are part of the decision making." As Brown's ideas have met the resistance of normal institutional inertia—and as Michel's charge of administrative incompetence has gained wide publicity—the result has been a lack of direction and pervasive malaise.

Brown seems to be aware of these mistakes. "We haven't spent time constituency-building," he said. "I probably should more aggressively focus the argument on the politics and on the administrative changes that have been made." The Michel investigation's value may be as a prod to push Brown to do just that, assuming it is not already too late. But if recent controversies prove anything, it is that Brown cannot meet the challenge alone. He could use help from interest groups outside the government that share his priorities and goals. "The issue isn't Sam and his weaknesses at all," Webb said. "It's the major attack on one of the most innovative and people-oriented programs in the federal government."

The mood in the director's office is up-beat at Action these days. There is a substantial increase for the agency in the Carter administration's 1980 budget and Brown supporters are interpreting this as a special benediction from the administration. But this triumph should not obscure the fact that Brown's room for maneuver is circumscribed. In the words of a friend and co-worker on the Vietnam moratorium, "the Action job is very hard if the background is not a war on poverty or some kind of urban program. It works best when joined to a real effort to meet social needs. In that kind of climate, Sam's work would be brilliant." In the absence of such a climate, Brown and the generation of politicians he represents have little room for mistakes. Their accomplishments remain fragile as long as they remain isolated. The obsession with Sam Brown's image only reinforces that isolation. What both Action and its director need is less attention to the politics of personality and more to the politics of poverty.

Torrijos not only won back the canal, but also set his country on a path toward democracy and prosperity.

The New Panama

by Stephen Kinzer

Ratification of the Panama Canal treaties last spring ensured a permanent place in history for mercurial Panamanian strongman General Omar Torrijos. But his unexpected decision six months later to withdraw from active politics and turn the government over to civilians may prove just as significant to the people of Panama, who are now freed from preoccupation with the treaty negotiations and are more anxious than ever for political participation and faster social change.

Torrijos took his country by surprise in September when he announced that he would not be a candidate for the six-year term as president due to begin the following month. Instead, he nominated 38-year-old

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former education minister Aristides Royo, a close confidante who was deeply involved in the negotiations for the canal treaties. Many Panamanians at first assumed that Royo was chosen to serve only as a figurehead while the charismatic general would continue to dictate policy. But Torrijos surprised them again by dropping out of sight and leaving Royo to govern on his own.

Royo is a disciple of Torrijos and intends to maintain the nationalist and progressive policies of his predecessor. Not that he has much choice: Torrijos is out of the limelight, but he is still National Guard commander and "guarantor of the revolutionary process." Torrijos has retired to his country villa at Farallon, 80 miles west of the capital, but he "is not out of touch," cautioned one Panamanian journalist. "Whatever Royo does, he'll know Omar is watching."

"Revolution" is not too strong a word to describe the impact of the coup Torrijos led against President Arnulfo Arias in 1968. Until that time, Panama had been ruled by a small, white, conservative elite which showed only intermittent interest in the living conditions of the majority of the nation's people. During a decade in power, Torrijos broke the back of this domestic elite and turned Panama's government to the task of internal development. He left a legacy praised in Royo's inauguration speech: 789 new schools, 2000 miles of new electric lines, 556 aqueducts to bring water to isolated villages and a 220-percent increase in the number of people receiving social security payments. Torrijos also propelled his nation to the forefront of the nonaligned movement and emerged during the canal debate as something of a third world hero. Royo called the new treaties with the United States "the most important conquest of the revolutionary process."

Royo faces a new task never undertaken by Torrijos: creating a democratic political structure that will allow Panamanians to participate in their own government. When Torrijos took power, he decreed what amounted to an end to political activity. The existing parties were silenced and anti-government organizing was discouraged. The press and many labor unions became subject to government control. A new legislative assembly was created but never given any real power. Torrijos relied for legitimacy on the 10,000-man National Guard at his command, and never built a party or organized mass movement to support his reforms.

Last August, Panamanians went to the polls to choose 505 representatives to a new national parliament. Its role depends largely on Royo. The literacy requirement for voting was abolished and districts were drawn to favor rural areas. Torrijos explained that the long-ignored villagers need "a stronger voice" in government; thus 45 percent of the voters elected 94 percent of the legislators. Of the 2000 candidates, only about 200 proclaimed themselves against the regime. Of the 505 elected, fewer than 100 are in any way "outside the revolution."

When the new legislature first met last October, it was expected only to rubber-stamp a new term for Torrijos. But as he stepped aside, Torrijos also submitted proposals that would transform the country by 1984 into an electoral democracy with a directly elected president.

The political parties, emerging from their enforced eclipse under Torrijos, are suspicious of the long-range plan. David Samudio, president of the Liberal party, declared himself "disillusioned and deceived" by it and asserted that "neither General Torrijos nor his intimate advisors"—a backhanded reference to Royo—"have any real desire to return Panama to a democratic form of government." He charged the government with attempting to manipulate legal machinery to remain in power "forever."

There have been indications that Royo is planning to build a mass political party to support the *Torrijista* policies of social activism, nationalism and nonalignment. Leading members of the National Liberation party from neighboring Costa Rica have been advising the *Torrijista* Democratic Revolutionary party, a loose pro-government group that may form the base for a national party.

Royo has pledged "a generalized campaign against the political and social inequalities which create hunger, illness and ignorance." To achieve this, he will have to follow Torrijos's balancing act of redistributing wealth without offending the private sector on which Panama continues to rely heavily. Royo got a quick reminder of what his job will be like during his first week in office, as he faced strikes of both teachers and garbage workers. Panama is struggling to break out of a recession brought on by the 1973-74 oil crisis, and the government cannot meet escalating demands for public employee wage increases, public works programs and widened social services.

Panama's economy is heavily dependent on world commerce. Under permissive banking laws promulgated by Torrijos, foreign banks have flocked to

Coming:

How the Government
Screws the Small Investor.

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Panama and made it an international financial shelter similar to Luxembourg and the Bahamas. Banks operating from Panama do some nine billion dollars in foreign business each year and pump another two billion dollars into Panama itself. In addition, foreign companies operating in Panama to take advantage of its location at the hub of world trade routes are rewarded by having to pay almost no taxes on their exports—though most also do some business within Panama, and are taxed at normal rates for domestic sales.

Panama has undertaken two ambitious projects to secure its position as a world commercial center. The government is spending $190 million to expand and modernize the free-trade zone at Colon, on the Atlantic end of the canal, where merchants can receive goods from around the world, assemble or repackage them, and ship them abroad, all without paying any import or export duties. New docking facilities, a cement plant and other projects at Colon are paying off as the zone expands and attracts traders from around the world. At the opposite end of the canal, the government is building a major new trans-shipment port for Alaskan oil. Planners hope it will offset the growing use of supertankers, which cannot fit through the canal.

One of the traditional facts of Panamanian life has been the country's lack of natural resources (unless strategic location can be considered a resource). But the discovery of rich copper deposits in the interior has set in motion the most massive digging project the country has seen since the canal was built. The open mine will be about two miles square and nearly a mile deep. It will cost over one billion dollars to complete, and is expected by the mid-1980s to generate more money than the canal (which will bring in about $250 million this year). The Cerro Colorado project is being celebrated as a symbol of Panama's future, even appearing on postage stamps long before major construction—not to mention production—begins. But already, rapidly rising cost estimates and declining prices for copper on the world market have placed the entire project in jeopardy and threaten to make it an example of Panama's vulnerability rather than its independence.

Businessmen were worried when Torrijos seized power in 1968 that he would demolish the private sector, but they soon discovered he had no such plans. Royo assumes office with a reputation as a leftist—something easy to acquire in Latin America—but business leaders remember their generally good relations with Torrijos and are withholding judgment of Royo. For his part, the new president has assiduously courted investors and announced the formation of a council of private business leaders to advise him on economic issues.

The signing of the canal treaties marked the end of a festering dispute between Panama and the US that turned bitter after the 1964 riots in which 21 Panamanians and four Americans were killed. Torrijos skillfully used the canal issue to unite people behind his government. He has been the instrument through which the nation has fulfilled what one government official called "her historic destiny of full unification under the Panamanian flag." Torrijos bore in silence attacks on himself and his country by US politicians—understanding how much the slurs helped his image at home. The one thing that would draw Torrijos out of retirement most quickly, everyone agrees, would be any threat to the orderly implementation of the treaties and the transfer of sovereignty over the Canal Zone.

President Carter soon will submit to Congress a package of legislation to implement the canal treaties. It will set timetables for details of the transfer, establish retirement provisions for American employees in the Zone, fix fee schedules and royalty payments to Panama and make other technical adjustments called for in the treaties. The administration also tentatively plans to propose a $345-million aid package for Panama. Conservatives on Capitol Hill are considering whether to seize the opportunity to fight the battle of the Panama Canal over again, or at least to restrict any future concessions to Panama. But in the Canal Zone itself, Americans seem resigned to the treaties. Their militance of two years ago has softened into resignation.

The worldwide debate over the canal treaties focused attention on Panama and brought pressure on Torrijos to liberalize his government. Wisely, he acceded to that pressure. Perhaps anticipating renewed scrutiny from the US Congress, President Royo is encouraging political parties, tolerating the presence of dissidents like aged ex-president Arias (who returned from his Miami exile last year), and proclaiming himself a "firm believer in the freedom of the Panamanian press." Freedom House, a private organization in New York which takes annual surveys of liberties in every nation, has listed Panama as one of four countries that were "more free" at the end of 1978 than when the year began.

Royo is more conventional in his personal habits than his predecessor and has already startled some of his people by showing up at his office for work every day. Torrijos often would disappear for weeks and then decide national policy at spur-of-the-moment midnight meetings at his Farallon estate.

General Torrijos was always careful not to give any of his subordinates too much time in the sun (he went through three foreign ministers during the crucial final stage of the canal negotiations) and so Royo remains quite distant from most Panamanians. "We don't know who Royo really is, but it isn't important," reflected a store owner near Panama City's bustling Santa Ana Plaza. "When we drink to him, we are really drinking to our own revolution. Omar pointed us down a long road to dignity. He chose Royo to get the job done, and all of us hope Royo can do it. Now that we have the treaties, it's time to get down to business."

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Actors

Something over 16 years ago (*TNR*, November 24, 1962) I wrote a review of three films in which a relative newcomer named Jane Fonda appeared. I deplored the fact that her extraordinary talent was not being adequately celebrated, and I dared to think that she might grow into a first-rate artist. My article was not exactly greeted with a chorus of approval. Evidently Fonda had the disadvantages—for serious consideration—of being a star's daughter, of being a sexy young woman, and of having appeared mostly in poor films. Hoots abounded. Fonda proceeded.

During the intervening years she has, if I may put it so personally, often given me a hard time. I'm not talking about her political activism, which is not my subject here though it's hardly incidental to her life. But much of her acting was, by the standards that her possibilities impose, minimally good. In *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* she seemed to be leaning on her talent, rather than making it serve her. Recently I saw *Klute* again, that ridiculously overrated dull thriller embroidered with stale camera artiness and impasted with globs of character-social seriousness through the device of analysis-sessions. In these films and some others, Fonda came as close to superficial, unmined work as such a gifted woman can get. She seemed to be doing a job, delivering the goods with cool marksmanlike precision but without straining her resources.

Lately, however, Fonda has been deepening and freshening again. It would be fanciful to connect this with her lessening radical activism. (Her political and social *concerns*, I emphasize, seem undiminished.) I simply note the seeming coincidence. Admittedly, her work in *Julia* and in *Coming Home* seemed crimped by the writing of the roles, one an attempt at secular hagiography and the other diluted and unfocused, but in three very different pictures in the last two years, her roles were well-enough written and she showed us superior acting. In the pastry-puff *Fun with Dick and Jane*, she bubbled. If there's such a thing as a non-dance performance that dances off the ground with sheer spirit—and there is—she did it here. In two current films she gives performances excellent in themselves and all the more impressive because they can be seen in tandem. Their differences make each one seem stronger.

Both, unfortunately, are in questionable pictures, but if you're interested in acting, they are very much worth seeing for Fonda. In *Comes a Horseman*, a modern Western, she plays a woman who inherited a small ranch and, with the help of one old man, is trying to keep it going against various odds. The moment she appears, she is that woman, coming to us out of a life of physical labor, hard skill earned with difficulties, hard principles defended with every nerve. Not a gesture, not an intonation, not a tremor of her presence comes from anywhere but that woman's being: these are not actor's characteristics studied and acquired, they are the natural results of a character created.

And Fonda is in *California Suite* (Columbia), one of those Neil Simon collections of skits with some tears, some laughs, some liberalism, some Book-of-the-Month Club candor. (Two elements, other than Fonda, are notable: Herbert Ross's continuingly slick direction and Walter Matthau's playing of farce—physical comedy—which I've never seen before.) Fonda is a smart New York journalist, divorced, California-hating, come to L.A. to reclaim her teenage daughter from her ex-husband. The moment she appears, her physical silhouette—I don't mean her dress, of course—is so different from *Comes a Horseman* that there's a small shock of fright, as if the transformation by art had something supernatural about it. Her pattern of movement, her vocal attack, her timing are so integral to what she is doing that before she was on the screen 30 seconds, all I was conscious of was knots—knots in this woman's psyche, emotional responses, ability to respond openly to an open approach—and her regret about this that she could never voice. Again what we are given is simply the current phenomenological evidence of a woman who existed before the film and will continue after it.

I haven't seen such an accidental juxtaposition of two differentiated fine performances by an American film actor since 1972, in Paul Newman's films *Sometimes a Great Notion* and *Pocket Money*. As with Newman, in Fonda's two roles there are no limps, no wigs, no broad accents, no stock-company trickery. Just (*just*!) creative imagination and the talent to embody it. For a number of years in the 1960s, I conducted a series about film on the PBS station in New York, and sometimes I would do a program on acting, with clips from two or three performances by the same actor. I don't often miss doing that program nowadays, but I wish I could do one with these Fonda films. Besides the pleasure it would give, it might possibly also do a little—o wan hope—to offset the rubbish that gets published about film acting, about these two performances especially.

I can't quite contend that Fonda has become the first-rate artist I thought and still think is in her. For one point, she has been lax in her choice of scripts.

Films Worth Seeing

Autumn Sonata. Ingmar Bergman directs Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann in a mother-daughter explosion. Splendid.

The Innocent. Visconti's last. Tiresome solipsistic amours of rich rake, Rome, c. 1895, but ravishing to look at.

Max Havelaar. Dutch film about Dutch rule in Indonesia, 150 years ago. Very long, but not draggy. Woodenly written, but so well acted and directed that it's always involving.

Superman. About Superman. Could have been better, but it's good enough.

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For another, she has missed playing some of the great roles that only the theater could give her. (Her Nora in the film of *A Doll House* was only a hint of the Nora she might play.) She hasn't even, to my knowledge, appeared on the stage since 1963—which is a mistake: she ought to let one medium feed the other in her work. Still she is the preeminent actress on the American screen. We have other good ones—for examples, Ellen Burstyn and the lately arrived Meryl Streep. Fonda, further on (she has already finished two more films), could move still further, could surprise us unsurprisingly. That is, she could move to unforeseen new strengths that nevertheless grow out of what we know about her.

Futile Question No. ????. With actresses like these on hand, how can Diane Keaton still be taken seriously? How can her parlor-act broken-arc comedy and facile hysterics not be perceived for what they are?

Lino Ventura is a quite different case from Fonda. This Italian-born, French-bred actor has been working in films, mostly French, for almost 30 years. Many of them have been imported, but they haven't made him the star in the US that he ought to be. I hope *The French Detective* (Quartet) will do it for him.

Ventura, unlike Jane Fonda, is an actor who gives one good performance over and over again. He can be called a personality actor so long as you include the second word: he is no mere personality-salesman. Like such previous personality actors as Spencer Tracy and Jean Gabin, with whom he shares qualities of quiet and threat, of lightly buried patience and deeply buried feelings, he lets you write the script for him. His face is on the screen, tacit and implicative, and you *want* to imagine what he is thinking and feeling. Part of the reason is that, like Tracy and Gabin, he is not only attractive, he seems personally reliable. You would like to know him. You feel, as you did with Tracy and Gabin, that if you got in some sort of jam, you would like Ventura to be with you. And part of the reason is that he is at least a good enough actor never to put you off, never to draw your attention by mechanics or unbelievability to the fiction.

Here, under Pierre Granier-Deferre's brisk and sufficiently imaginative direction, he plays a veteran detective in a small city, Rouen, who goes up against the local big shot in a murder case. Fundamentally, it's Kojak in Rouen but it never sags, and the ending—the best moment—is a sharp cut-off whose irony very pleasantly takes a couple of seconds to seep in. A fast, flavorful thriller.

Is it too late for Ventura to be a star in the US? I hope not. He's an enjoyable film actor, and I'd like the chance to enjoy him more.

Leon Edel: the art of biography

The Figure Under the Carpet

Biography from time to time seems to have a frightening effect on creative artists. George Eliot called it "a disease of English literature." Vladimir Nabokov describes it as "psycho-plagiarism." Auden repeatedly—even while reviewing biographies with delight for *The New Yorker*—called it "always superfluous" and "usually in bad taste." Unlike Yeats, unlike Henry James who called biography "one of the greatest observed adventures of mankind," the artists seem to be discussing certain kinds of biography which deal in the small coin of life, not the larger treasures: and they are also worried about the invasion of privacy. T.S. Eliot certainly was when he ordered that no biography be sanctioned by his heirs. Thackeray had done the same earlier, and also Matthew Arnold. Eliot put the matter clearly when he said "curiosity about the private life of a public man may be of three kinds: the useful, the harmless and the impertinent."

I mention these opinions to show how widely apart men of genius are in their view of life-portraits. We must regard what they say about biography as individual statements reflecting personal misgivings; they do not alter the fact of biography itself; they relate rather to how it is practiced. And now I can hear you asking why I speak of biography as a young art, when we can summon Plutarch out of the olden times and Boswell out of modernity. I see these men, centuries apart, as having laid certain cornerstones in the way which Defoe laid a cornerstone for the novel by writing *Robinson Crusoe*. Plutarch shored up for us what remained of the great legends and myths of the noble Greeks and Romans. He assembled his materials—ancient lore, old wives' tales, stories of splendors and glories, miseries and defeats—traveling the length of the Mediterranean in his historical quest. We pay homage to him as an historian who sought the meaning of great lives as a form of moral philosophy. And Shakespeare paid biography his homage when he infused into Plutarch the divine poetry by which we today know his Roman plays—Caesar, Brutus, Antony and the others. Moving to the 18th century, we pay homage to Boswell for creating a unique work. He remained close to his subject for a quarter of a century and wrote minutes of the great man's talk which have the ring of truth. But Boswell, like Plutarch, is a foundation stone, not a model. Modern Boswells have sometimes ended in disaster. I have dreamed of writing an essay on them—how Robert Frost's Boswell began his work in love and adulation and ended in disparagement and hate; how Faulkner's listened to his talk of liquor and horses only to be frustrated by Faulkner's widow; how Thornton Wilder named a young Boswell whose enthusiasm led Wilder hastily to withdraw; not to speak of Shaw's Boswell who wrote a fat book which bears unmistakable evidence that Shaw did much of the writing.

The great problem which we must face at the start is the oppressive weight of modern archives. Gone are the days when biographies could be written out

This essay was originally presented as the keynote lecture at a symposium on the art of biography hosted by the National Portrait Gallery in Washington on November 13 and 14, 1978. It is to appear as one of seven essays in *Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art*, edited by Marc Pachter, which is to be published by New Republic Books in May.

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of half a dozen shoe boxes, or pieced together out of little facts like the royal grant of wine to Chaucer, or Shakespeare's second best bed. From not having enough material, biography has come into the dubious possession of great wealth—more than it can absorb and digest. The modern archive preserves everything: fancy writing a biography out of a man's check stubs! Can a biographer afford to spend his lifetime wading through such great masses of paper, Himalayas of photographs, microfilms, kinescopes, and still emerge, if not suffocated, with any sense of a face or a personality? What comes out of these archives are books too heavy and too long.

We do not need—as so many biographers seem to think—a record of every last date in a subject's datebook, a catalogue of gourmet dinners, and chapter and verse on every glorious drunk, when these have such simple and familiar ritualistic beginnings—and archetypal endings. Nor do we need clouds of witnesses for every life—as exemplified in the lives of the two Cranes, Stephen and Hart, which occupy 800 pages of print each, even though the subjects died at 30. To paraphrase Ruskin, it is not pleasant to have great parts of archives flung in a reader's face; and the subject ends up fenced in by walls of quotation and abysses of anecdote. Biography still has to learn the art of the portrait. It is all too often the work of journeymen, as Lytton Strachey said. Critics, poets, novelists, should write biographies. John Berryman performed a service when he wrote a life of Stephen Crane. Virginia Woolf was doing the same when she wrote her book on Roger Fry. And Norman Mailer, whatever his motivations, revealed a proper sense of biography when as a novelist he sought to capture a figure as elusive and as delicate as Marilyn Monroe. Even if we judge his work as a failure, we must praise his undertaking.

I do not disparage archives. I simply groan when I see one. Those great cluttered masses of papers, those mountains of photographs in Texas of Lyndon B., and no doubt those endless tapes that will speak to posterity, like the recorded telephone calls of Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau. Who is to say what should be kept and what shouldn't? I remember finding a fur neckpiece in a box that contained letters of Henry James in the Library of Congress. The fur, I was told, was public property and it was a question whether it should be quietly burned or properly sequestered. It told me merely that the lady who had received the letters got her archive mixed with her wardrobe. Yet perhaps that mangy little fur had its place. The oddest little scrap of paper sometimes takes on an awesome significance after the passage of time, and I agree with T.S. Eliot that no one ever knows what a laundry list will reveal. No, we must allow papers to accumulate in a laissez-faire spirit, we must allow biographical subjects to fill entire barns with Internal Revenue records and political figures to gather their memorabilia so gratifying to their egos. Our concern is how to deal with this clutter, how to confront our subject, how to achieve the clean mastery of the portrait painter unconcerned with archives, who reads only the lines of the face, the settled mouth, the color of the cheeks, the brushstrokes and pencilmarks of time. More often than not this offers us the revealing mask of life. The biographer must learn to know the mask—and in doing this he will have won half the battle. The other half is his real battle, the most difficult part of his task—his search for what I call the figure under the carpet, the evidence in the reverse of the tapestry, the life-myth of a given mask.

In our quest for the life-myth we tread on dangerous speculative and inferential ground, ground that requires all of our attention, all of our accumulated resources. For we must read certain psychological signs which enable us to understand what people really are saying behind the faces they put on, behind the utterances they allow themselves to make before the world. The aggressive emotion that masquerades as a cutting witticism; the excessive endearment that conceals a certain animus; the pleasant joking remark that is accompanied by a hostile gesture; the hostile gesture that turns into a pat on the back; the sudden slip of the tongue which says the opposite of what has been intended. This is the "psychological evidence" a biographer must learn to read, even as he learns to read the handwriting of his personality and his slips of the pen.

Armed with this kind of eyesight, a biographer reads much more in the materials than any sketchers of facades. To my vision, Pope John Paul I expressed a great deal when he refused to be crowned and asked for a simplification of a ceremony old in history. By that one gesture, he told the world the course of his apostolate, brief though it was. There was a message in that decision—a message about power—which the observant might have read. And if I were writing the pope's biography, I would start by seeking an answer to this important question.

The method I am proposing for biography is related to the methods of Sherlock Holmes and also to those of Sigmund Freud. It requires a certain kind of talent, a certain kind of inwardness to look at the reverse of a tapestry, to know when and where to seek the figure under the carpet.

II

What do I mean by the hidden personal myth? Let me take a writer like Ernest Hemingway, whose life and habits have been widely recorded, not least by a circle of his relatives and friends. We know he liked to shoot, to fish, to drink; we know that he was boastful. He wanted to be a champion. He wanted to fight wars—on his own terms—and shoot big game and catch the biggest fish and live the manliest life—the supermanly life. Was not one of his books entitled *Men Without Women*? That tells us something—though it may not be what you think. Small wonder that Max Eastman asked a very proper biographical question—why did Hemingway make such a fuss about the hair on his chest? And we remember that when Hemingway ran into Eastman in Maxwell Perkins's office at Scribner's, he proved Eastman's insight by demanding a fight. The two writers ended on the floor with a great flailing of arms and legs. "I wasn't going to box with him," Eastman said when he described the incident to me. "I just put my arms around him and embraced him." Hemingway wanted to prove he had hair on his chest. Now the obvious myth—and I choose Hemingway because he can be easily approached—was the novelist's drive to do the biggest, kill the biggest, achieve the greatest, and that is written large in all his books.

That is the manifest myth. But as a biographer, I go beyond this and ask—what does Hemingway *express*? What is Hemingway saying to us in all his books and all his actions? A great deal, and as is nearly always the case, much that is exactly the opposite of what he seems to be saying. A manly man doesn't need to prove his masculinity every moment of the day. Only someone who is troubled and not at all secure with himself and with his role puts up his fists and spoils for a fight over a casual remark by an

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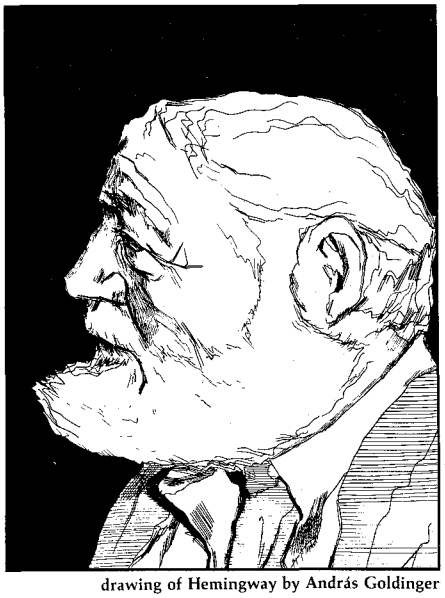
easy-going and affectionate person like Max Eastman. The biographical questions multiply, and in effect we ask ourselves: what is Hemingway defending himself against, so compulsive is his drive to action and away from examined feeling, so consistent is his quest to surpass himself, as if he always must



drawing of Hemingway by András Goldinger

prove—even after he has had the world's acclaim—that he is the best and the greatest? Critics have remarked on this, and I say nothing that has not already been widely discussed—but it illustrates what I mean by the figure under the carpet. Hemingway's figure *in* the carpet is his pattern of seeking out violence wherever he can find it, seeking out courage, and resignation, and heroism and perseverance, and avoiding too much feeling. But the reverse of the tapestry tells us that somewhere within resides a troubled, uncertain, insecure figure, who works terribly hard to give himself eternal assurance. Where there seems to be immense fulfillment, we discern extraordinary inadequacy—and self-flagellation, and a high competetiveness; also a singular want of generosity toward his fellow artists, since he must always proclaim himself the champ. Life reduced to the terms of the bull-ring and the prize-fight is a very narrow kind of life indeed. The biography of Hemingway which captures the real portrait, the portrait within, still needs to be written. And what is important in Hemingway's archive, which is large, are the answers to the questions that will relate his doubts, his failures, his struggles, and not the answers to his successes which are written in the public prints.

III

I will now take an example less obvious and less well known—that of Henry David Thoreau. The biographers of Thoreau have always accepted his view of himself and his mission at Walden Pond "to suck the marrow of life"—to meditate, and learn the virtues of simplicity and solitude, and not be a slave to the bondages of life, like mortgages and banks and the humdrum entanglements of the farmer for whom Thoreau expresses considerable contempt. *Walden* is a beautiful book, an exquisite distillation of the intentions and desires of Thoreau, a work of the imagination that pretends it is a true story, and it embodies a myth all America—indeed the whole world—has adopted: that of getting away from the slavery of civilization, facing the world as God made it, not as man ravaged it.

This is one part of Thoreau's story, and it is a part of his greatness. The question a biographer seeking the truth must equally ask if he wants to see the figure under Thoreau's carpet, is what motivated him to this idealistic undertaking? Why did he decide to build a hut? In other words why, beyond his own beautiful rationalizations, did he *really* go to Walden pond? That seems to be a difficult question to answer. Yet by focusing on it within the materials of Thoreau's life a number of answers emerge. There is that day the remarkable woodsman went fishing and in cooking the fish set fire to the woods and almost burned Concord down. There is the simple fact that the farmers apparently had as much contempt for him as he had for them. There is evidence that Concord thought him a man of enormous talent who idled his time away walking in the woods. There is the man who said he'd rather shake the outstretched branch of a tree than the hand of Henry Thoreau. And there is Emerson who quoted this over Thoreau's grave.

Thoreau's hut, we learn, did not stand in great loneliness; he did not plant it in a wilderness. He planted it on Emerson's land on the shores of Walden, with Emerson's consent. This made it easy for him to criticize those who had to pay rent or mortgages. The railway lay within easy distance. His mother's house was one mile down the road and, said the Boston hostess, Annie Fields, in her diary, David Thoreau was a *very* good son, "even when living in his retirement at Walden Pond, he would come home every day." Others have told us that he raided the family cookie jar while describing how he subsisted on the beans he grew in his field. To discover this, and to remember how often Thoreau dined with the Emersons, and gregariously joined the citizens of Concord around the cracker barrel in the local store, is to overlook his life-struggle, the inner biographical problem that the literary portrait painter must face. The evidence can be read in the moving parable within the pages of *Walden*, which tells us more than a thousand letters might in an archive. Thoreau wrote:

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle dove, and am still on their trail. Many

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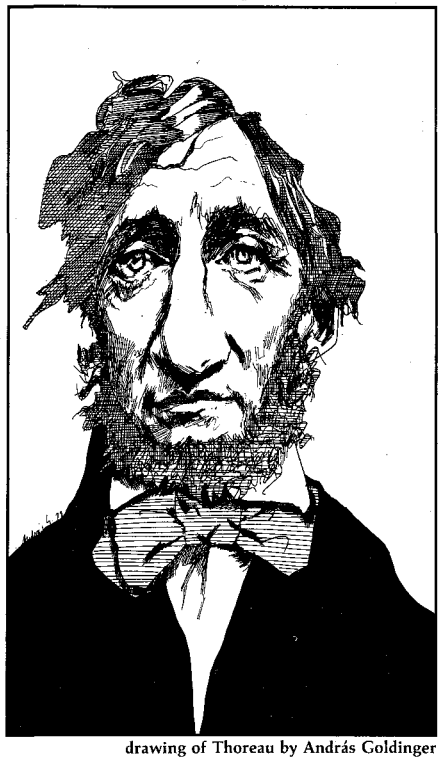
are the travellers I have spoken to concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

Loss and anxiety about loss—a bay horse, a hound, a turtle dove. Thoreau's little parable, which he launches enigmatically in *Walden*, contains a great deal that a biographer needs to guide him into the reverse of the tapestry of the author of *Walden*. Here, in capsule, are three members of the animal kingdom closest to mankind; the faithful hound, guide, protector, loving and lovable; the horse of Thoreau's time, plougher of fields, the embodiment of strength, thrust, support, spirited symbol of all that is instinctual in man; and finally the turtle dove, the soft cooing swift messenger, bearer of tidings as in the Bible, symbol of love and of the Holy Ghost. The biographer of Thoreau must write not the story of a solitude-loving, nature-loving, eternally questing self-satisfied isolato who despises his neighbors, and is despised by them, but the story of a man who feels he has lost the deepest part of himself—without guide and support, without strength and love, a lost little boy of Concord, a loner, a New England narcissus. The biography would have to be written not in a debunking spirit but in compassion, and with the realization that this man who felt he had lost so much was able to transcend his losses and create an American myth and the work of art known as *Walden*.

IV

Biography stated in these terms begins to become more than a recital of facts, more than a description of an individual's minute doings, more than a study of achievement, when we allow ourselves to glimpse the myths within and behind the individual, the inner myth we all create in order to live, the myth that tells us we have some being, some selfhood, some goal, something to strive for beyond the fulfillments of food or sex or creature comforts. I remember a young man who set out to write the life of Rex Stout, the creator of Nero Wolfe, who asked me how to go about his job. I found rising within me, out of unconscious dictation, the sentence: "You will have to find out why Rex, a king, sought to disguise himself as Nero, an emperor—and a bad emperor at that!"

Those of us who still remember Rex Stout might have thought he had kingly ambitions, for he founded Freedom House, he fought for copyright, he became head of countless enlightened organizations. And he wrote a series of books in which a very benign fat man with an evil name, living in isolation, solves crimes and punishes miscreants and makes the good prevail. Indeed he



drawing of Thoreau by András Goldinger

hires a legman whose name is Goodwin—a winner of the good. Do not laugh when I play with the nomenclature of biographical subjects: the names by which we are called, the names we call ourselves, these too are part of our myth. Rex Stout was a thin man and he made Nero Wolfe very stout indeed, 260 pounds, thus reversing the saying that in every stout man a thin man struggles to be freed.

But if Rex Stout had imperial dreams, why such a bad emperor? One can discover easily where the Wolf comes from. Rex Stout's middle name was Todhunter—which is Scots for a fox-hunter. So we see the series of metamorphoses: king-emperor, fox-wolf, thin-stout. An earlier detective created by Stout was named Tecumseh Fox—and this demonstrates how consistent the imagination of myth can be: Tecumseh was a very imperial Shawnee. Such literary games are amusing enough; they become more fascinating, however, when examined in the light of psychology. We learn in our inquiries that Rex Stout in creating opposites of himself was also consciously creating opposites of Sherlock Holmes, who was, as it happened, a tall thin man like himself. He once told an inquirer he had decided that Conan Doyle was the king of detective story writers (how inescapable the designation "king") and since he wanted the same kind of kingship he decided to make Nero Wolfe the opposite in every way to Sherlock Holmes. Holmes played the violin, Wolfe raised orchids; Holmes took cocaine, Wolfe drank beer; Holmes went anywhere to solve a crime, Wolfe stayed at home.

This tells us that Rex Stout was engaged in a double process—that of creating a persona involving himself and an opposite to Conan Doyle's detective with whom he was identified. He did something else. He followed Doyle in creating an American Dr. Watson who is Watson's opposite too—Archie Goodwin is as bright and keen as Watson is genially dull and phlegmatic. If we go back to look at Stout and Doyle themselves we discover that both were living out in their imaginations a king-myth or an emperor-myth. What fun it was for Doyle, a hard-working Victorian doctor turned author, to cut loose in his imagination and become Sherlock Holmes, visit fancy iniquitous dens, take drugs, play a moody fiddle, while also remaining the bluff phlegmatic Victorian, Dr. Watson. This duality of the common self and the fantasy self, what is this duality but creative and imaginative man tied on the one hand to the usual and the routine and the bondage of society, seeking to escape by putting his literal and prosaic self into a persona, Dr. Watson or Archie Goodwin; while, on the other hand, the imaginative self achieves freedoms beyond common reach, including victories over Scotland Yard or Manhattan police inspectors? I suspect that Conan Doyle got most of his fun in life out of being Sherlock Holmes. But I discern, without going deeply into the matter, more troubled fun for Rex Stout, who somehow had to choose the name of evil, that of a bad emperor rather than of a good one, turn foxes into wolves, because he perhaps was a bit afraid of his imperial dreams—he had some guilt about them.

I think I have sufficiently shown the way in which we often play games of secret sharer—Joseph Conrad's term—with our mythic selves. The creative artist ends by turning his fantasies and problems into works that bring the fame and power that is sought, even as political figures through their acts create their public personae, even as our

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generals on occasion become their myths on the battlefield. In writing the lives of such men we find ourselves involved in a truly great adventure and not merely that of archaeological digging among their archives, which any well-instructed graduate student can do. We go beyond this necessary routine into the search for an individual's hidden dreams of himself, and then discover how they have been acted out, either in an elaborate and imaginative defense against guilts and anxieties, as in Hemingway or Thoreau, or in a series of fantasy conversions or metamorphoses as in Stout and Conan Doyle. The biographer who writes the life of his subject's self-concept passes through the facade into the inner house of life.

V

The National Portrait Gallery in London last spring and summer held a fascinating exhibition. They carefully gathered in a series of portraits painted by the moderns—those who no longer paint faces simply as they see them. It was an exhibition which showed how cubists, vorticists, impressionists and the other innovators of our time sought to put on canvas living subjects treated out of new visions of reality. I would have difficulty describing in words the many rich things these portrait painters did—but it will best illustrate my point if I say to you that in Roland Penrose's portrait of his wife, he depicted in his surrealism clustering birds and butterflies along the mouth and eyes. And we know how revolutionary is Picasso's portrait of Gertrude Stein. I cannot remember when I found an exhibition more exhilarating. For what I saw was that these modern painters and sculptors—Picasso and Giacometti, Kokoscha and Matisse, Modigliani and Tchelitchev and earlier Gaudier Brzeska—had all done exactly what I am saying the biographer must now do: they sought to go behind the facade, to penetrate the mask.

There was Wyndham Lewis's Edith Sitwell in which that lady was reduced to her flat-voiced impassivity or Sickert's portrait of Edward VIII which caught in a strange and remarkable way that poor monarch's low self-esteem. Giacometti said of his sculptured portraits "the adventure, the great adventure, is to see something unknown appear each day in the same face," and Picasso, speaking of his Gertrude Stein, said, "Everybody thinks she is not at all like her portrait but never mind, in the end she will manage to look just like it."

It was Graham Sutherland who stated the case for biography best of all in this exhibition. "I think it is true," he said, "that only those totally without physical vanity, educated in painting, or with exceptionally good manners, can disguise their feelings of shock or even revulsion when they are confronted for the first time with a reasonably truthful image of themselves."

For me these modern painters had with consistency carried the truths of their art into their representation of living persons as they had of landscape and rooms and the things that surround us in our world. They sought the inwardness and the myth; they did what Van Gogh did when he painted a chair or a picture of himself. They moved from the splendid verisimilitude of Rembrandt's self-portraits to a kind of UR-portrait. In the recreation of lives, we have reached a time when we must, like these painters, give a new account of ourselves. We must not flinch from the realities we have discovered; we must realize that beyond the flesh and the legend there is an inner sense of self, an inner man or woman, who shapes and expresses, alters and clothes the personality that is our subject and our art. Archives become then simply illustrative—and by the method of seeking the secret self, the inner myth, our subjects stand revealed not in the papers they accumulated but in the works they wrought, the acts they performed, the shape they gave to their existence.

Leon Edel

Leon Edel is the biographer of the prize-winning life of Henry James and of the forthcoming group biography, *Bloomsbury, A House of Lions*, to be published in the spring by J.B. Lippincott.

Books Considered

Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South by Albert J. Raboteau

(Oxford University Press; $14.95)

Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865 by Thomas L. Webber

(W.W. Norton; $14.95)

The history of the Old South, particularly of slavery, has attracted an extraordinarily high level of talent during the 20th century: from Phillips and Du Bois to Sydnor and Woodson to Aptheker and Stampp to Potter and the greatest of southern historians, C. Vann Woodward. And many other outstanding names could be added. The 1970s have shown that the appeal remains. Political and economic history are back in vogue—thanks be to God and some splendid young talent—and new ground is being broken. Primarily, however, the 1970s are likely to be remembered as the decade in which the history of black southerners, the slaves especially, came into its own.

Despite the superb efforts of W.E.B. Du Bois, who pointed the way, blacks until recently were seen but not heard: a people who suffered in history but had no history of their own. The slaves, largely illiterate, had left no written record. Therefore, according to the canons of the (white) profession, they obviously had no record to leave. Losers. Du Bois pointed to the spirituals, the folklore, the oral tradition, and to the outburst of creativity during Reconstruction. These slaves—these victims without a history—not only fought for political power and the land but threw themselves into the building of churches and schools. Strange undertakings for a people whose degradation had osten-

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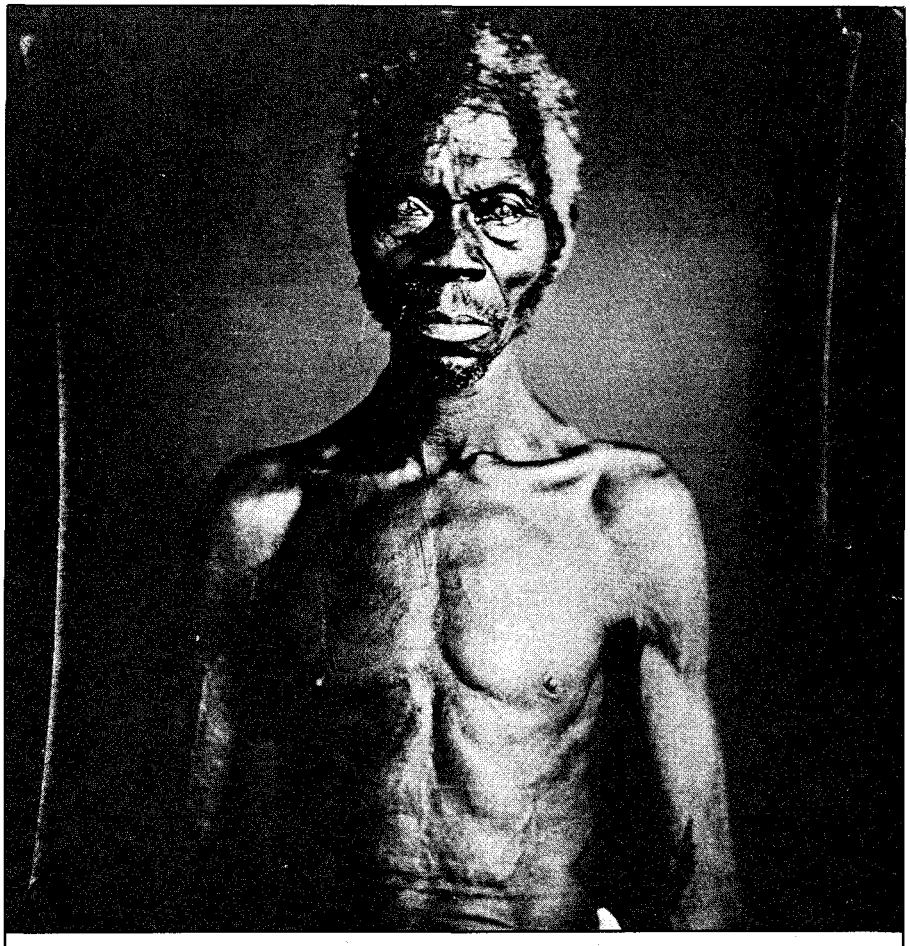
sibly been complete, whose culture had been destroyed—if indeed they ever had any—and whose spirit had been broken.

In truth, the notion that blacks in slavery had no history rested on no research. It was taken for granted. And by a profession that worships "facts," scorns "theory," and with tiresome regularity invents ever more sophisticated methods of "objective" research. Since the slaves left no written record, no research was possible. Or desirable. What then replaced research in this wonderful let-the-facts-speak-for-themselves profession? Why, theory, of course—albeit packaged as its opposite. Regrettably, the theory, like so much else in American life, was racist. But if it had only been that, the liberalism of the 1940s and 1950s would have buried it. For the leading scholars of those days were honestly and often courageously anti-racist, including Elkins, who intended his misguided thesis of an infantilized people as an anti-racist polemic.

What the debate, especially over Elkins's controversial book, has shown is that the racist assumptions which long dominated the literature were themselves a special case, however virulent, of class bias. Not accidentally, southern historians discovered black culture and creativity—discovered the impact of blacks upon world history—at precisely the moment when other historians were discovering that workers, peasants, women and other losers had also left a powerful mark and exacted a price from their tormentors.

As these books by Raboteau and Webber show, the history of the submerged, oppressed and exploited has come into its own. The complex reasons for this new turn must await discussion elsewhere. Here, let me settle for one observation. The campus turmoil of the 1960s had its unattractive side, and so did some of its programmatic effects. Still, the fact remains: blacks had long been systematically excluded from "white" academia and literally had to force their way in. (Affirmative action threatens academic standards! How often do we hear this supreme hypocrisy? Let's see: to all intents and purposes, women, blacks and certain other minorities were excluded until recently: i.e., the pool of potential excellence was reduced, by, say, 75 percent. Unless of course we assume that blacks, women and those others are innately inferior. Which would be OK, if only our friends at *Commentary* and *National Review* would say so plainly. Or to put it another way, I deny that anyone who remained silent during the appalling years of injustice—no, of assault upon the pool of academic excellence—has the right to open his mouth now. But I digress.) If today black history is being studied, written, taught, learned, it is largely because of the political victories that have opened the universities to blacks. Not that they have been doing all the work. But I think that such outstanding white contributors as Levine, Litwack, Fogel, Engerman or Berlin—to quickly name a few—will agree with me that the black presence on our own sanctified turf has forced us all to go back to the drawing boards. For myself, I know that whatever such black colleagues as Harding, Lester, Mitchell or Stuckey think of my book *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, I could not have written it without them.

The story that has unfolded is by now familiar even to nonspecialists. General works on black life in slavery, like those of Blassingame, Owens and Huggins, are being widely read, and, increasingly, so are more specialized efforts. Good new work is appearing, and much more is on the way. The participating scholars, black and white, occasionally fall on each other in harsh disputes over particulars, some of which have far-reaching implications. But, taken together, they have done the job. No one who writes about slavery without careful attention to slave life and culture—and to the testimony of the slaves themselves—will be taken seriously.



The Slaves
by Susanne Everett

(G.P. Putnam's Sons; $20)

Among the several hundred pictures that Susanne Everett has chosen to accompany her story of the development of slavery from Ancient Greece to the American South, the daguerrotype shown above may most movingly express the suffering that story entailed. The picture—one of the earliest known photographs of southern slaves—was made in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1850, at the request of the scientist Louis Agassiz, who aimed to prove that black Africans and white Americans belonged to different species.

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The specific features of the history of the slaves will continue to be debated sharply, but it is the measure of the victory over racist superstition that a younger generation of scholars has been freed to bear down on essential questions rather than to have to waste precious time, energy and talent on belabored refutations of ideological cant.

These two fine books, which feature sound scholarship, judicious reflection and accessible styles, plunge into the deeper questions of the form and content of the slave community. They build on a generation of new work, which they graciously acknowledge, while they duly file criticisms of the specifics, always constructively and with good temper. Their common theme is black resistance to the degradation of slavery and black achievement in forging a viable culture. Yet neither slips into romantic posturing or dangerous exaggerations; each makes clear the harsh terms of the struggle and the terrible burden it imposed.

Raboteau provides a good synthesis of recent work on slave religion and buttresses it with his own judgments and research into such materials as the slave narratives, spirituals and church records. His opening chapter, "The African Diaspora," contains a solid survey of the African legacy and the religious development of black people in North and South America. He presents the theme of his book cogently:

> *In the Americas the religions of Africa have not been merely preserved as static "Africanisms" or as archaic "retentions." The fact is that they have continued to develop as living traditions putting down new roots in new soil, bearing new fruits as unique hybrids of American origin. African styles of worship, forms of ritual, systems of belief, and fundamental perspectives have remained vital on this side of the Atlantic, not because they were preserved in a "pure" orthodoxy but because they were transformed.*

Raboteau offers valuable discussions of the process by which enslaved blacks became Christians. His insistence upon the late (roughly 1810-1820) conversion of most is troublesome, and surely more work needs to be done on the 18th century. But he has much to offer along the way and is especially good in combining a discussion of institutional change with one of personal conversion. He evaluates white as well as black contributions fairly, and he properly concludes with an account of the emergence of a discreet black Christianity largely developed by the blacks themselves—one that provided the spiritual basis for resistance to oppression and for acceptance of what could not be avoided.

Regrettably, Raboteau has little to say about the theological content of the religion and makes only vague reference to "a common and basic African theological perspective." He offers virtually nothing on the slaves' ideas of sin, immortality and redemption. Yet much in his book—e.g., his sensitive treatment of the spirituals and of folk beliefs—points toward a specific theology, without which the religious experience as a whole would reduce to community effort at mutual support.

Webber draws on similar sources and brings to bear a generally similar point of view, but he ranges more widely than Raboteau. He begins and ends with useful theoretical discussions of socialization theory without, however, cluttering the book up with jargon. His great strength, like Raboteau's, lies in his sensitivity to the lives of those he is writing about.

Part One of *Deep Like the Rivers* analyzes the intentions and messages of those whites who set out to indoctrinate the slaves; Part Two, what the blacks actually learned; and Part Three, the ways in which the blacks fought off white indoctrination and tried to teach themselves an appropriate set of values and a world view. For Webber: "The people of the quarter community are best understood as a society within a society, rather than as a group of individuals within a closed, totally controlled institution. . . ." He too stresses the centrality of religion and adds valuable discussions of family life and folk culture. He too stresses the resistance to slavery's dehumanizing pressures. Among his strongest contributions are explorations of the ways blacks taught themselves self-respect, community solidarity, and a sense of moral and even physical superiority to their masters. Especially good is his evaluation of parents, drivers (slave foremen), and black preachers as role models and molders of the young. His nuanced account leaves no mystery about the postbellum action of blacks in building churches and schools. They had prepared themselves well.

Raboteau and Webber unfortunately follow current trends in one way they ought not to. It is perfectly clear that the history of the slaves, with its delineation of a rich and distinctive cultural legacy, sheds much light on political problems—

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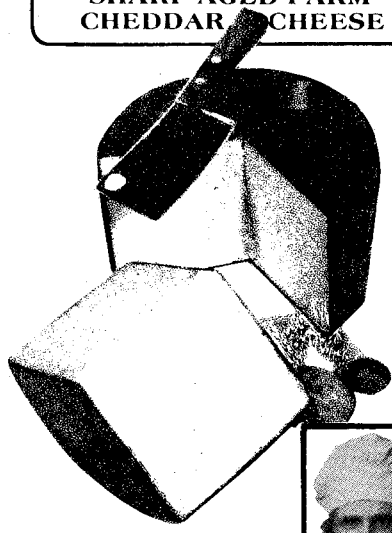

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specifically the problem of black nationalism. One might therefore expect that those who write this history would meet their responsibility to make a considered political evaluation. Yet Fogel and Engerman, almost alone, have done so. They begin with an assertion that a bourgeois culture existed in the slave quarters and end with a defense of liberal integrationism. Those who, like Raboteau, Webber and most recent writers, have discerned a black cultural development with a wide range of autonomy have generally fallen silent on the political implications of their findings, which clearly support some of the black nationalists' main contentions. This silence does no one any good, and we may hope that it will soon be broken.

Eugene D. Genovese

Eugene D. Genovese is professor of history at the University of Rochester and the editor of *Marxist Perspectives*.

The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom edited by Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron and Joseph Kermisz

(Stein and Day; $16.95)

Adam Czerniakow, first chairman of the Warsaw *Judenrat* or Jewish Council after the German conquest of Poland, left behind a series of notebooks in which he jotted down details of his frustrating encounters with the Nazi hierarchy as he tried to help keep people alive in that remorseless atmosphere of death. More than 10 years after its appearance in Hebrew, Czerniakow's *Warsaw Diary* is finally available to the English reading public. Purchased in 1959 from an "unknown source" by a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, acquired by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem in 1964, the *Diary* has been translated from the original Polish by Stanislaw Staron, who teaches political science at the University of Vermont, and the staff of Yad Vashem. It has been edited by Staron together with Raul Hilberg, Staron's colleague at Vermont and author of the comprehensive *Destruction of the European Jews*, and Josef Kermisz, Director of Archives at Yad Vashem. It has been provided with *two* introductions, and includes numerous explanatory notes, most of which identify the individuals and organizations alluded to by Czerniakow in his daily entries.

And *daily* entries they were, with virtually no exceptions, from September 6, 1939, shortly after the German invasion, to July 23, 1942, when Czerniakow took his own life, a day after the first mass deportations to Treblinka had begun. The *Diary* consists of nine notebooks, though one of them (from December 14, 1940 through April 22, 1941) is missing. A clue to its loss may be hidden in the published journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum, archivist (and victim) of the Warsaw Ghetto. Ringelblum mentions that Czerniakow was arrested early in April 1941 (a period included in the missing notebook), and speculates on possible causes for the arrest. Under the entry for April 6, 1941, Ringelblum writes: "A notebook was supposed to have been found on Czerniakow with a notation for 60,000 zlotys which does not figure in the general Council books." Since Czerniakow frequently listed financial records in his *Diary*, it is possible that the "notebook" mentioned by Ringelblum is the missing one, which the Gestapo would have examined with care but felt no obligation to return. It may still be mouldering in some musty Gestapo file.

As chairman of the Jewish Council, Czerniakow was in almost daily contact with Nazi military, civilian and security officials, less frequently with Polish municipal authorities. He could move about the Ghetto and occasionally, with special permission, even beyond its limits. The resulting information, insofar as he digested it, is dutifully recorded in his entries. But his internal vision did not range as widely. Unlike Ringelblum's *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* and Chaim Kaplan's *Warsaw Diary*, works by men of reflective and analytical intelligence, Czerniakow's *Diary* does not fully convey the implications of the subtitle which the editors have added to it: *Prelude to Doom*. That "prelude" may resound in the mind of the informed reader, but for a long time—too long—it is scarcely discernible in Czerniakow's pages. One of the most exasperating challenges of his *Diary* is the problem of trying to understand his persistent insensitivity to that impending doom, whose echo was heard by Ringelblum and Kaplan long before Czerniakow allowed himself to acknowledge its faintest chords.

One great source of interest in the *Diary* is what occupied Czerniakow's time and mind *instead*. His daily entries are rarely more than a paragraph long, often only a few lines, really just notations, as if he merely wished to remind himself of events that he could expand on after the war. Since he dealt with Nazi officialdom nearly every day (unlike Ringelblum and Kaplan), perhaps he feared Gestapo discovery. But one does not have the impression that he would have turned to analysis in his *Diary* without this inhibition. He was more absorbed with immediate concerns, many of them statistical: the sums available for community needs, the size of the Ghetto population, the living space required for Jews arriving from other areas, the kind and amount of taxes necessary to increase meager financial resources, arrests, smuggling and the rising death toll. He may have suspected the impossible task before him (though not the ultimate fate of his fellow citizens) when he wrote early in 1940: "It's a miracle my head is not spinning," and asked the SS the next day to relieve him of the duties of chairman. Was he pleased or chagrined when he received the reply that "this would be inadvisable"?

But he would not flee. A month later, in February 1940, he writes: "I was offered a certificate to Palestine—I refused to have my name placed on the list." Like Ringelblum, who declined an offer from the Polish underground to smuggle him to England, Czerniakow considered it his duty to remain close to Warsaw's suffering Jews. He was openly—perhaps excessively—contemptuous of those who emigrated, exclaiming to one applicant who had refused to pay the emigration tax: "You louse, I will not forget, you louse, how

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you pretended to act as a leader and are now running away with others like you, leaving the masses in this horrid situation." His real contribution emerges here: the community needed a buffer, someone to handle the endless discussions, memoranda, petitions and inquiries, all apparently necessary to ease the lot of the Ghetto inhabitants. During the years before deportation, such a role was indispensable, if *ultimately* ineffectual. Czerniakow's efforts may seem futile in retrospect, but at the time he must have thought they were crucial. We know now that when legal defenses disappear, the disenfranchised—*if* their opponents are as ruthless as the Nazis—are helpless: only violence can combat violence. But for a multitude of reasons the Jews of Warsaw, including many of their distinguished leaders, did not arrive at this conclusion until more than four-fifths of their number were dead.

Czerniakow seemed unable to function without the belief that there was a proper administrative procedure for expressing every discontent. He could not get it through his head that the rules had changed, that the Jews no longer had *any* status, that he was being used by the SS and other Nazi authorities. When he heard rumors, as he did with increasing frequency after mid-1941, about large scale "resettlements" of Jewish populations in the east, instead of sending a secret messenger out of the Ghetto to verify these reports (as Ringelblum did), Czerniakow preferred to live between two realities: the looming extermination that he could not confront, and the world of administrative heroism, where he still felt in control of the future. By March 1942 the noose was uncomfortably tight, but Czerniakow still could not name the threat: "Alarming news from Lwow (expulsion of 30,000 people), Mielec and Lublin." The Belzec death camp was now in operation, but two days later we find Czerniakow's other world taking over, as he records the incredible statement: "I told Auerswald [Nazi commissar for the Warsaw Ghetto] that the Jews are not suited for heavy manual work digging with shovels outdoors. They should be utilized in workshops." How the Nazis must have welcomed this useful advice! Czerniakow's fatal weakness was his naive assumption that his persecutors would show him the same good faith he showed them.

What one has trouble understanding is why Czerniakow persisted so long in this futile kind of "heroism," which achieved glory for no one, including himself. One feels that he clung to his illusions to preserve the coherence of his private world, while the public one disintegrated around him. This strange tension between a vain attempt to control the onrushing tide of destruction through official complaint and the unarticulated suspicion that a disaster immune to any form of protest was about to overwhelm the Jews grows strong through the fatal year of 1942. On April 1 (a Seder night), Czerniakow tersely reports: "News from Lublin. Ninety per cent of the Jews are to leave Lublin within the next few days." Both Belzec and Sobibor death camps were in full operation by now, and both were in the Lublin district. Why wasn't Czerniakow, a public figure in a position to warn potential victims, as precisely informed as Emmanuel Ringelblum, who in June, a month before the deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto began, wrote in *his* journal: "They're following this plan: The 'non-productive elements,' children up to the age of ten and old people over sixty, are locked in sealed railroad cars, which are guarded by a German detail and transported to an unknown destination. Generally, the transport goes toward Belzec, where every trace of the 'resettled' Jews disappears."

The answer may be that Adam Czerniakow, like the majority of Jews in Europe and the West, like Roosevelt and Churchill and all those throughout the world who heard or read of the death camps but refused to believe in them, did not possess an imagination of disaster. It was a human response—but no help to the victims. Those accustomed to the morality of civilized behavior must have their noses rubbed in the muck of atrocity before they will smell catastrophe—and even then many will refuse to recognize the odor. Czerniakow was no exception. His comment in October 1939 on the Nazi-mandated census of Warsaw Jews betrays the moral innocence of the gratified administrator, an innocence that never left him: "The census is going well—the forms in large majority of cases returned by the house superintendent. . . ." Contrast the response of Chaim Kaplan, who two weeks earlier in *his* diary had asked of the same census: "For what purpose? Nobody knows. But it is certain that it's not for the benefit of the Jews. Our heart tells us that a catastrophe for the Jewry of Poland is hidden in this demand."

Czerniakow's heart was more hopeful, but he did not reckon—how many did?—on the inconceivable cruelty of the Final Solution. The blame lay there, but he lacked the vision to recognize the true nature of the power with which he was contending. He saw himself as an agent; the Nazis knew he was a tool. Unwittingly, he pitted his humanity against their policy of extermination in an unequal struggle, and we learn from his *Diary* how pitiful a weapon one's humanity is against such an oppressor. He listened patiently to appeals from Ghetto inhabitants, made his way tirelessly to the offices of the Gestapo and Commissar Auerswald,

AUSPICES

Cold, blustery cider weather, the flat fields
Bleached pale as straw, the leaves, such as remain,
Pumpkin or leather-brown. These are the wilds
Of loneliness, huge, vacant, sour and plain.

The sky is hourless dusk, portending rain.
Or perhaps snow. This narrow footpath edges
A small stand of scrub pine, warped as with pain,
And baneberry lofts its little poisoned pledges.

The footpath ends in a dried waterhole,
Plastered with black like old tar-paper siding.
The fearfullest desolations of the soul
Image themselves as local and abiding.

Even if I should get away from here
My trouser legs are stuck with burrs and seeds,
Grappled and spiked reminders of my fear,
Standing alone among the beggarweeds.

Anthony Hecht

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pleaded for concessions, better treatment (especially for the orphans), money for essential food and fuel, more living space, schools, a park, vocational training—and, occasionally, he was successful. But now we know that the "gains" were not to his credit; they represented Nazi attempts to minimize panic and resistance while the gas chambers of Treblinka were being planned and built.

As we reflect on Czerniakow's repeated complaints to the SS against various violations of Jewish persons and property, we cannot escape a sense of the *irrelevance* of his moral earnestness in a world that mocked his morality. His meeting with Gestapo officers a few hours before he committed suicide on July 23, 1942, as the deportations to Treblinka were beginning, must have finally convinced him of this. "I am powerless . . . ," he confessed in one of his suicide notes; "I can no longer bear all this." The manner of his death, however, betrays neither cowardice nor martyrdom. Czerniakow simply could no longer do anything to save his own life or the lives of others; but he would not preside over a Jewish Council that certified their deaths. As he sat in his office for the last time with potassium cyanide in one hand and a glass of water in the other, he must have realized that the situation of Warsaw Jewry was hopeless, that his own hopes had deluded him (and others), that it was now too late for Warsaw's abandoned Jews to resist *effectively*. As the Warsaw Ghetto uprising almost exactly nine months later would prove, he was not entirely mistaken.

Retrospective judgment, like retrospective wisdom, has limited value. Emmanuel Ringelblum, who thought Czerniakow incompetent, wrote tersely of his death: "too late, a sign of weakness—should have called for resistance—a weak man." But Ringelblum does not say how 350,000 people, without trained military leaders, many of them starving and almost all without weapons, might have united to resist; nor does he explain how multitudes of ordinary people could be induced to fight when they knew from experience the ruthless suppression they could expect from their heavily armed enemies. Only after more than 80 percent of surviving Warsaw Jewry had been shipped to Treblinka did the most active among the youthful remainder realize that they had nothing to lose, that they must find weapons and fight.

Chaim Kaplan, who in 1940 called Czerniakow "a mediocre man whose education and intelligence combine to make him something of a nincompoop," said more respectfully of his suicide: "His end proves conclusively that he worked and strove for the good of his people; that he wanted its welfare and continuity even though not everything done in his name was praiseworthy." This charitable and moderate eulogy may stand as a fair response to Czerniakow the man. To Czerniakow the public figure, who two days before the deportations to Treblinka began, asked for, received (and apparently believed!) an official Nazi denial of the impending event, then blithely issued a public proclamation to that effect—to this Czerniakow we respond with less fervor. *The Warsaw Diary* offers a portrait of an inexperienced leader who believed that his compromises were for the best because he could not or would not imagine the worst. May Czerniakow's example, and the fate of Warsaw Jewry, remind us of how vulnerable we become when we lose the liberty of meaningful choice, and persuade us of the vanity of trying to oppose decent values to the ambitions of indecent men.

Lawrence L. Langer

Lawrence L. Langer teaches literature at Simmons College in Boston. He is the author of *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (Yale) and *The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature* (Beacon).

A Dress of Fire
by Dahlia Ravikovitch
translated by Chana Bloch

(Sheep Meadow Press; $7.95)

Dahlia Ravikovitch started writing poetry in her early 20s and for some two decades now she has been recognized as a leading Hebrew poet. Like other Israeli writers of her generation, she turned away from those national and collective themes which, perhaps unavoidably, preoccupied the writers who had reached their maturity shortly before the establishment of Israel as a state. Her poetry deals overwhelmingly with extreme states of personal life: desolation, loss, estrangement, breakdown. The range of theme is narrow, the range of implication wide. Translated competently and sometimes beautifully by Chana Bloch, this poetry seems to me of very high quality. The first requirement for a new writer is satisfied: that there be a distinctive voice, notably different from other voices.

In Ravikovitch's poems the pressure of immediate experience is ruthless, sometimes shattering. It forms a rack of memory: death of her father while the poet was still a child, instabilities reaching the point at which "people break," even hallucinations beyond that point. No American reader can avoid comparison with Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton, comparisons useful insofar as they are quickly rejected. For Ravikovitch's work is at once more severe and more humorous: it is seldom marred by that groping for trauma which disfigures Plath's poems and never by that emotional coarseness which ruins Sexton's. The vulnerable self crying for solace is here, even the self wrapping its skin with a coat of pain; but this self, though *in* poems, does not write them.

(I know or suspect that in some final reckoning the person who suffers and the poet who writes may be the same; but the possibility of such an ultimate unity doesn't make it any the less useful to speak of these two "selves"—victim and voice—as distinct. Operationally, it is a way of figuring the process by which experience is transformed through language.)

The title poem, "A Dress of Fire," is the most Plath-like. Even there the first voice we hear is *another* voice: "You know . . . they made you a dress of fire." The image of this dress, Medea-like, is repeated with incantatory hammering, until the final lines:

I'm not wearing a dress at all,
what's burning is me.

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Toppling over the edge of trauma, the poem still grapples for a handful of detachment: the "I" does not quite consume the poem. Still, its final effect is too much that of mere blow or shock, unlikely to maintain its strength through repeated readings.

In other poems, breakdown and desolation are at once intimate and objectified. "The Blue West," a yearned-for horizon of the Israeli scene, gives scope to personal plight through images of landscape, "a seashore where there are no ships." Perhaps, at the end, "a sun will shine for us warm as an eye," and this very possibility of an ambiguous extension of reference satisfies our need for turning and space.

Landscape, history, the Bible, and best of all, a caustic mother wit: all figure behind the shaken self. Sometimes the world becomes urgently sentient, as if charged with Ravikovitchian vibrations: "Stars plunge from their height like epileptics / Grasses moan / the new growth more painful / than wilting." Again, we are taken to the perimeter of excess, but the firmness of the writer, inhabiting the same flesh as the vulnerable person, takes command.

In "Mechanical Doll" the disintegration of self takes on a terrifying form, and embittered ironies regarding "therapy" are equally terrifying:

That night, I was a mechanical doll,
And I turned round and round, to the right
and the left,
And I fell on my face and broke in half,
And they tried to fix me with all their skill
So I was a proper doll again.
After that my manner was poised and
polite . . .

There follow two extremely powerful lines, into and beyond pathos. The experience is chaos, but the rendering, form:

But I was already a different kind:
An injured twig hanging by a thread.

Ravikovitch speaks sardonically to a lover, warning him against that pride in sickness to which she apparently has every right:

And you: don't believe what I say
when it's perverse
or marvelous.
I go to sleep like everyone else
and I don't practise magic.
I forgo the honors in advance . . .

The last line is echoed in another poem fierce with self-knowledge:

Pain has no use,
I assure you:
a worm in a piece of fruit
won't make the fruit taste better

She is a poet of wit, severe and costly, and this saves her, at least in the poems:

Narcissus was so much in love with himself.
Only a fool doesn't understand
he loved the river, too.

Her language bristles with sharpness: a man who "loved me didn't leave me a fingernail." When in despair, she writes, "one is tempted to become a block of salt / With a mineral strength." Anyone, I suppose, can become a block of salt, but salvation lies in "mineral strength."

The personal lyric as it shadows yet distances itself from the person is Ravikovitch's dominant mode, but there are also some fine dramatic pieces. Here is "Hills of Salt," a more familiar kind of poem, exquisitely controlled and finished:

Foam fluttered on the sea like birds' wings.
Two salt hills were left on the beach,
and the sea was a country of lakes,
with sailboats
gleaming
like soap bubbles.
The two of us sat, each by his pool,
two sand strips between us
and a wealth of seaweed.
The leaves of fern swayed back and forth,
grasping at the rocks in their lust.

A mass of seaweed broke loose and fell at
my feet,
and my eyelids were heavy with sun.
And the sea rose up and spilled over
from pool to pool,
blue streams in a net of light.

Pools lapped at the palms of our hands,
the sand between us—the length of two arms.
We did not draw near all that day,
not by a hairsbreadth,
our bodies two salt hills and our feet seaweed.

To read these poems is to see the whole world pressed into one imperilled being, and then, through the calming maneuvers of imagination, to watch that being glide past its own squalor and smallness. Narcissus "loved the river, too," loved the world out there.

Irving Howe

Irving Howe's most recent book is *Leon Trotsky* (Viking).

Lobbying the Corporation: Citizen Challenges to Business Authority by David Vogel

(Basic Books; $14.95)

Years before Ed Koch, Herman Badillo and Jimmy Carter devised plans to lure business into the South Bronx, the late Saul Alinsky dreamed that a major corporation would be forced to hold its annual shareholders meeting in Yankee Stadium.

The movement that Alinsky never lived to organize—he planned to call it "Proxies for People"—would have begun by organizing tens of thousands of middle-class liberals to purchase shares of the stock of a major corporation. Then the new shareholders would demand to attend the corporation's annual meeting, forcing the firm to convene in Yankee Stadium. "Proxies for People" would compel the meeting to consider resolutions favoring progressive corporate social policies, such as hiring more women and minorities, cleaning up the environment and providing safer working conditions.

Always the realistic radical, Alinsky foresaw the inevitable outcome of the still-imaginary showdown at Yankee Stadium: "They [the corporate management] will have their thousand or so stockholders there, and we'll have 75,000 from Proxies for People. I want to see the chairman of the board—in front of the cameras and mass media, with 75,000 people voting 'aye' on our resolutions—announce that 98% of the stock in his hands votes 'nay,' and they win."

Alinsky never imagined that a citizen insurgency would prevail within the internal politics of the corporation. Instead, he saw corporate politics as yet another arena in which citizen activists could embarrass the handful of people

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who monopolize public and private power in our society. A handful of people—scarcely enough to fill a row of seats in Yankee Stadium—can and do vote 98 percent of the stock on the major corporations. Even if citizen activists could mobilize 75,000 people to buy stock and attend shareholder meetings, they'd still be unable to vote more than two, three or at the most five percent of the corporation's stock in favor of resolution opposing the priorities of corporate management. To Alinsky, the point of citizen activism wasn't to outvote management at its own meeting. The point was mobilizing 75,000 people. The point was showing how few people actually control corporate America. The point was getting the story on TV.

David Vogel retells Alinsky's parable in his comprehensive, well researched, and clearly written study, *Lobbying the Corporation: Citizen Challenges to Corporate Authority.* This book originated as a graduate dissertation at Princeton, and it retains both the flaws and the virtues that might be expected in the work of an author who has spent more time in university libraries than on picket lines. One wonders whether Vogel understands what Alinsky was saying (for, as Vogel notes, Alinsky criticized "Campaign GM" for its failure to organize a mass movement and its reliance on lobbying institutional investors), or whether Vogel believes that public interest lawyers, ethical investors and other individuals acting without the support of mass movements can win any lasting success in taming the corporations.

Among his conclusions, Vogel maintains that citizen challenges have become a permanent feature of the social environment in which corporations operate, and that these challenges, combined with the increased willingness of institutional investors to challenge corporate managements, may spur modifications in corporate policies. An important merit of *Lobbying the Corporation* is Vogel's detailed history of the largely unheralded work of organizations such as the Investor Responsibility Research Center, the Council on Economic Priorities and the Corporate Data Exchange, which have scrutinized the operations of major corporations and revealed much about their ownership, their profitability and the impact of their policies upon society.

As Vogel notes, these research-oriented activists—together with the generation of public interest lawyers inspired by Ralph Nader—have modified the legal climate in which the corporations function. In recent rulings, the Securities and Exchange Commission has broadened the scope of the Policy Resolutions that can be brought before shareholder meetings and expanded the requirements for corporations to disclose the details of their operations to prospective shareholders, and, hence, to the general public. In addition, Vogel reports, institutional investors no longer consider themselves bound by the time-honored "Wall Street Rule"—that the only appropriate way for institutional investors to express disagreement with management policies is by unloading their stock holdings. Instead, Vogel notes, institutional investors are now willing to differ with—and sometimes even vote against—corporate managements.

But what impact does all of this have upon Americans who don't own corporate stock, and who lack the money, the time, and the highly specialized skills necessary to play the citizen activist's game of trying to beat corporate managers on their home court (because shareholder meetings are still held at posh, inaccessible resort hotels—not at Yankee Stadium)? As Vogel acknowledges, much of the impact of the citizen activist movement has been cosmetic rather than substantive. Corporations have added blacks and women, if not moderate income people of any color or sex, to their boards of directors; but, with a few notable exceptions such as the Reverend Leon Sullivan and Sister Jane Scully (Gulf Oil), they usually vote with management anyway. Corporate flacks have been grinding out press releases about corporate responsibility; annual reports now boast of more than increased earnings per share; and Mobil Oil waxes philosophical on *The New York Times* op-ed page. But none of this makes the 1971 Pinto any safer, restores the jobs of the Youngstown steelworkers, lowers the price of gasoline, or benefits any of the other victims of corporate priorities.

Vogel cites the histories of numerous anti-corporate campaigns, but fails to give the needed emphasis to the obvious conclusion: the campaigns that have had mass movements behind them succeeded, and the ones that relied entirely upon lawyers, researchers and investors failed. The anti-war movement successfully challenged Dow Chemical's production of napalm; the civil rights movement integrated public accommodations; in a history Vogel retells, the Alinsky-organized Rochester FIGHT movement forced Eastman Kodak to hire hundreds more black workers; and the labor movement forced Willie Farah to sign a union contract, and, right now, is making J.P. Stevens a pariah even in the corporate world. These struggles were waged in the streets, as well as in other arenas, and Vogel's own histories reveal the futility of the anti-corporate campaigns fought exclusively in libraries, courtrooms, board rooms and hotels.

The bottom line of this study of anti-corporate campaigning is: there's still no substitute for organizing. You could learn this lesson without reading this book, but—if only for its impressive assemblage of easily accessible facts about recent challenges to the corporations—anyone interested in challenging the corporations should read *Lobbying the Corporation.*

David Kusnet

David Kusnet's articles and reviews have appeared in *The Nation, The Village Voice, Dissent, The New Leader, The Washington Monthly* and *The Newsletter of the Democratic Left.*

I Write What I Like
by Steve Biko
edited by Father Aelred Stubbs

(Harper & Row; $8.95)

Steve Biko is probably the most well-known martyr of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. He was only 30 years old when he was killed by police in September 1977. But by then Biko had already contributed greatly to the black liberation movement by founding two important dissident groups: SASO

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(South African Students' Organization) and the BPC (Black People's Convention). Moreover it was Biko who best articulated the politics of these now banned organizations and the popular, militant mood they represent.

I Write What I Like is a compilation of essays, interviews and speeches that provides the most extensive record available of what Biko stood for and against, his strategy for achieving his goals, and his style of exposition. Although he wrote under the constant threat of censorship, his writings are remarkably uninhibited; appropriately, Biko often used "Frank Talk" as his pen name.

Biko espouses what he terms "black consciousness." But although he has been widely portrayed as an African "moderate," black consciousness is an ideology of revolutionary black nationalism. "Blacks no longer seek to reform the system," Biko declares, "because so doing implies acceptance of the major points around which the system revolves." Biko not only demands black majority rule, but also envisions an economically egalitarian society. For, as he puts it, "any form of political freedom which does not touch on the proper distribution of wealth is meaningless." Far more prominent than these socialist sentiments is Biko's appeal for black racial pride, unity and group responsibility. "Black man, you are on your own!" is his rallying cry.

I Write What I Like bristles with protest against the barbarous treatment of blacks by the ruling Nationalist party government. Biko analyzes the regime with unflinching realism, acknowledging both its strength and its ruthless determination to maintain its domination. "Black people," says Biko, "should not be surprised at some of the atrocities committed by the government. . . . To expect justice from them at any stage is to be naive." More controversial is his attitude toward white radicals and liberals, many of whom he mockingly dismisses as "self-appointed trustees of black interests." Biko posits what sociologist Robert Blauner has called, in a different context, "the iron law of white privilege": the idea that white South Africans share, whether they like it or not, the benefits of apartheid. Here one should consider that even the most hated white radicals in the anti-apartheid movement receive better treatment than dissident blacks, as the killings of Biko and many other imprisoned Africans tellingly demonstrate. Biko maintains that because of their inescapable racial privilege, whites are almost unavoidably tainted with attitudes that make it impossible for them to join and genuinely to aid a black-led movement for black power.

Biko's insistence upon exclusively black political organizations stems not from black racism, but rather from a realization that white participation in black anti-apartheid movements has often distorted and dampened these struggles. White liberals have demanded, dogmatically, that all anti-racist oppostion groups must necessarily be integrated. Biko complains, however, that "it never occurred to the liberals that the integration they insisted upon as an effective way of opposing apartheid was impossible to achieve in South Africa." Interracial coalitions are doomed because, as things now stand, blacks and even the most well-intentioned whites cannot meet as equals. When they do meet and join together in protest, the imbalance in power between them naturally leads to circumstances where, in Biko's words, there develops "a one-way course, with the whites doing all the talking and the blacks the listening." Biko did not reject integrated coalitions in principle, only so long as the weakness of the blacks compels them to be subordinate partners in such alliances. "Once the various groups within a given community have asserted themselves to the point that mutual respect has to be shown," says Biko, "then you have the ingredients for a true and meaningful integration." He suggests that until such time, sympathetic whites should fight racism within their own society and leave the guidance of black resistance to black leadership.

If Biko debunks the liberal "myth of integration," he attacks as well the Marxist view that the conflict in South Africa is primarily one of class rather than race. The debate over the relative significance of race and class in the dynamic of black oppression has long vexed anti-apartheid struggles; the ideological conflict betwen two of the most important resistance organizations, the ANC (African National Congress) and the PAC (Pan-African Congress), is largely rooted in disagreement over this question. Biko's position toward it is unequivocal: "Colour," he declares, is "the greatest single determinant for political action." For "even the most down-trodden white worker still has a lot to lose if the system is changed." Hence, for Biko, race war rather than class domination is the most accurate description of the terrible reality besetting his people.

The central theme of Biko's strategy for liberation is the need for revolutionaries to reclaim the hearts and minds of the black masses. "What is necessary," he writes, is a "grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim." Convinced that "the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed," Biko seeks throughout his writing to psychologically rehabilitate an unorganized, insecure, fearful people. He does this using the whip of scorn and the spur of pride. He caustically chides blacks, accusing them at one point of having become "a race of beggars who smile at the enemy and swear at him in the sanctity of their toilets; who shout 'Baas' willingly during the day and call the white man a dog in their buses as they go home." Yet he also champions black culture and reminds his people of their historic achievements and their legacy of struggle.

Two pivotal issues which Biko addresses are the efficacy of violence in the domestic struggle against apartheid and the relationship of the United States to South Africa. Biko remained unsettled

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concerning the use of violence. The organizations he founded were officially committed to non-violent, legal tactics. But to Biko this commitment was neither absolute nor based upon morality; instead it was conditional and rooted in realistic strategic considerations, the most important being the reaction of the government. In May 1976, Biko defended his adherence to non-violence partly on the basis of his belief that the Nationalist party regime was not "set on a Hitlerised course." But the ruthless repression that smashed Biko's organizations, snuffed out his life, and subjected his countrymen even more fully than before to the menace of police terror makes even Biko seem to have been overly optimistic.

In a memorandum to Senator Dick Clark, Biko sharply criticized the United States's continuing unwillingness to apply the kind of pressure to the apartheid regime that would compel it to institute meaningful reforms. While indicating this nation's "shameful role," Biko commented, significantly, that "because of her bad record America is a poor second to Russia when it comes to choice of an ally." That American indifference could make Steve Biko begin glancing toward Russia in this manner indicates the extent to which our foreign policy continues to push popular, democratic-minded third-world nationalists into the waiting arms of the Soviets.

Father Aelred Stubbs, the white Anglican priest who compiled and edited *I Write What I Like*, deserves our gratitude for making Biko's ideas more accessible. One hopes Stubbs's efforts will help direct attention away from sterile recollections of Biko's death to serious considerations of the content and significance of his politics. Unfortunately, Stubbs's essay on Biko is terribly misleading. Yet it is inadvertently revealing since it shows precisely the tendencies of certain liberal whites that Biko criticized so harshly. Stubbs's memoir is marred by self-absorption; burdening a reader with a mass of irrelevant details, it tells us almost as much about its author as about Biko. Stubbs appears more intent upon proving the intimacy of his relationship with Biko than examining the relationship's important social implications. The memoir also demonstrates the way in which the liberal conscience, seared by guilt, becomes more interested in its own moral redemption than in destroying apartheid. Finally, Stubbs allows his commitment to Christianity to exaggerate the influence of religion on Biko's politics. He even goes so far as to call Biko "a true martyr of Christ," transforming the anti-apartheid struggle into a Christian morality play. Still, the irony is that, for all their failings, courageous white liberals like Father Stubbs and Donald Woods have played an instrumental role in rescuing Steve Biko and his message from the cruel anonymity which often buries victims of South African repression. *I Write What I Like* is a product of a noble effort, featuring the work of a noble man in pursuit of a noble dream: in Biko's words, "a non-racial, just and egalitarian society in which colour, creed and race shall form no point of reference."

Randall Kennedy

Randall Kennedy is a graduate student in politics studying at Balliol College, Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar.

NATIONAL REVIEW devotes its entire current issue (Feb. 2) to the Anti-Nuclear Lobby and what it is costing America. Editor Wm. F. Buckley Jr. calls this special issue "perhaps the single most important issue of the magazine ever published." It is now available at $2 per copy; send your order to the address indicated. Don't miss it!

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The Ex-Magician and Other Stories by Murilo Rubião

(Harper & Row; $10)

Descent of Man by T. Coraghessan Boyle

(Atlantic-Little Brown; $9.95)

The ex-magician of Murilo Rubião's story was not born, and so, try as he will, he cannot die. He first saw himself in the mirror of a tavern; his hair was gray and he was carrying the tavern owner in his pocket. The surprised tavern owner demands an explanation for the magician's presence in the world, but he cannot give one, any more than we can. He only knows that he wants a past, like the people who come to see him perform. But he cannot have one. So he despairs. He cuts off his magic hands; they grow back. He pulls lions from his pocket and sets them around him in a fierce circle. But it's no use: they won't attack him. And when he attacks and devours them, hoping to die of a mammoth case of indigestion, he gets a stomach ache instead. He tries a gun: it becomes a pencil as soon as he pulls the trigger. Finally, after overhearing a chance remark that to be a civil servant is like committing suicide "little by little," he joins the Department of State—the one touch of the quotidian in this chronicle of the marvelous. And slowly he does begin to die, or at any rate to lose the magic that prevents him from dying. His powers fail to assure him "job security" at a time of budget cutting. They also fail to entice a secretary, to whose breasts he writes an unavailing poem. Without his secretary, without friends, he sits alone at the end, pulling at his once magical fingers:

> *I have the impression that a swallow is about to disengage itself from my fingertips. I sigh aloud, deeply.*
>
> *Of course, the illusion only serves to intensify my regret not to have created a total magical world.*

Now it is very possible that the ex-magician is meant to stand for God. We notice that he can't die and that his magic, like our maker's, is woefully incomplete. Carnal relationships are beyond him, as one hopes they are beyond Him. Uncreated himself, he is a prodigal creator. And so on. But one can also read the story as a parable on the well-known power of bureaucracy to bleach the soul of man, since directly he starts to work at a large government office, the magician loses his magic. The

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magician's lament about the limits of his power may also strike us as inviting a parallel to the limits of fiction—that it must always deal with some such indigestible bit of reality as the Department of State or the buxom but unwilling secretary. That is my reading of the story, but I offer it with hesitation: Rubião's runic tales resist interpretation in the degree that they invite it. They are by turns baffling, funny, philosophic and outrageous.

Like the "Ex-Magician from the Minhota Tavern," many of the stories deal with the terror of infinity. "Three Names for Godfredo," the example, is about a man who realizes that he has been married before, that there is a line of unremembered wives extending into his past. He kills several of these wives, to thin out their numbers. But they keep re-materializing, as guilt-fed fantasies bothersomely will. One night he finds a strange woman sitting at the head of his dining room table. Another wife? he asks. No, just a fiancée, she answers and adds: "After we are married we can move to your city." What city? His city, apparently. Having forgotten his wives he must logically have forgotten much else—his city, the look of a summer day, his first car. The story ends with Godfredo staring into the widening black hole of his memory.

Other stories deal with the complementary terrors of finitude: the burden of the past, the prison house of time, states of literal and metaphoric confinement. In one story a month lasts 20 years—without ceasing to be a month. In another, a man changes into a pig, a dromedary, a cloud and finally into the verb "decide" in order to escape an imprecating voice that must belong to his father. But there's no escape, not even for a "tiny verb: unconjugatable." These stories are prefaced by quotations from that harsh book of prophecy and doom, the Old Testament, and there is a sense of ineluctable fate at work here, of a something fixed and invariant in the universe that mocks the transforming powers of magicians and men. The terrible thing is that this something is not transcendent, but seems to be lodged right at the heart of the ordinary.

The best examples of this Kafkaesque imminence, this sense of evil haunting the quotidian, comes in "The Glass Flower," a three-page story (all these stories are miniatures) about a "Russian Officer," who is renewed by the visit of the lovely Marialice. The morning after she arrives at his country villa, his hair grows back, his eye patch falls away, the clutch of his melancholy loosens. He is happy. But then comes this denouement: "The end of the vacation coincided with the final days of rain. Under a tremendous downpour Eronides took her to the station." The terror is all in that innocent word "vacation": Marialice is some sort of a schoolgirl and now she must return to school. No matter that she is salvation to the Russian Officer. It's the rules:

. . . His eyes clouded, and a hoarse cry welled up in his throat.

The white handkerchief that waved from a window was the only reply. And parallel tracks, vanishing in the distance, condemned him to an irreparable solitude.

On the way back, a branch tore out his sight.

Earlier, on one of their frolics in the woods, Marialice had said: "I hope a branch pokes your eyes out, you contemptible heel." You've got to be careful what you say in Rubião's world. As in ours, there is no such thing as a casual remark.

This sense of correspondence between his bizarre world and our world grows and grows as one reads these stories. For all their formidable opacity, they deal with primordial human fears—canvass possibilities all too real and likely. They shock, and they can move.

T. Coraghessan Boyle's stories are as strange as Rubião's—in one it unnaccountably begins to rain blood, for example—but their strangeness is all on the surface. Once you get used to the idea that Kid Gullet is challenging Angelo P. for the world heavyweight eating championship, "The Champ" settles comfortably into the grooves of a conceit—one that is clever and diverting but predictable and quite without resonance. Boyle must be given credit for coming up with novel fictional ideas: in one story a Norse poet records his band's disappointed discovery of America ("that place will never amount to anything"); "Heart of a Champion," a candid replay of the 1950s Lassie show, is an anxious piece of fun; a third story deals divertingly with one of the late Chairman Mao's swims in the Yangtze. But the gimmicks, the novel ideas, are all; the stories merely illustrate them. *The Descent of Man* is strictly magazine fiction: easy to read and easy to forget. But the fictional mandalas of the remarkable Brazilian, Murilo Rubião, tease the mind with unexplored meanings.

Jack Beatty

Brief Reviews

Public and Private Morality edited by Stuart Hampshire

(Cambridge University Press; $15.95, $3.95 paperback)

Although Machiavelli has gotten a bad name in the popularized understanding of his political philosophy, he must be credited with having addressed most explicitly a central issue of politics—the so-called problem of "dirty hands." The apparent necessity for force, deceit and manipulation in politics raises a pressing question: to what extent are the deeds and decisions of public officials to be judged and restrained by the moral principles that govern individual behavior?

The problem of "dirty hands" is announced in the forward to *Public and Private Morality* as the central theme of this collection of essays by five professional philosophers. In fact, their arguments are far more wide-ranging, addressing more general questions of moral philosophy and political theory. In particular, T. M. Scanlon's essay—his interpretation of the liberal conception of rights—and Ronald Dworkin's contribution—an attempt to identify the unifying principle of liberalism—are only tangentially related to the central theme of the apparent discontinuity between public and private morality.

The essays by Bernard Williams, Thomas Nagel and Stuart Hampshire form the core of the book, analyzing the Machiavellian problem from three distinct but related points of view. These philosophers cannot be dismissed as politically naive, ivory-tower idealists. Each accepts the basic premise of political "realism," that men in public roles must do, and are justified in doing, certain things that would be morally impermissible for a private individual. Their point is not to lament political realities, but to understand why and to what extent the principles of political action are different from those that apply to private conduct.

Hampshire and Nagel analyze the differences between public and private

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morality by identifying the distinctive characteristics of political action. Public policies and political decisions are judged and defended almost entirely in terms of their consequences, whereas individual behavior must be justified in terms of intentions as well. Public officials must also take account of larger-scale consequences than a private individual. In arguing that these and other relevant differences between public and private action justify the use of certain "morally disagreeable" methods in politics, Hampshire and Nagel are still a far cry from the hard-nosed, ruthless pragmatist. Their "realism" is qualified.

Nagel argues that the liberties granted to public officials constitute only one aspect of the difference between public and private morality; political action is also subject to certain restrictions that are not imposed on private conduct. A politician may be more justified in using deceit and fraud, but he is also expected to show greater concern for the common good than a private individual. Furthermore, preferential concern for one's family and friends is morally permissible, even obligatory, for private individuals, but is forbidden under a public official's duty to be impartial.

While admitting these important differences, the authors do not treat public and private life as if they were distinct and self-contained spheres of activity; the continuities between public and private morality are as important as the discontinuities. Even though an individual in a public role has some kind of "moral immunity," he is still ultimately responsible for his deeds in that capacity. And the authors still condemn the most horrendous political affronts to morality—Vietnam, Watergate—on the grounds that politicians ignored the extent to which their decisions must respect ordinary moral decencies.

Although the precise relation between public and private morality remains vague, Hampshire's and Nagel's accounts are satisfying because they do justice to both the necessities of political life (which are ignored by idealists) *and* our moral sensibilities (which are deprecated by realists). For in explaining why politicians may be justified in doing what seems "morally disagreeable," Hampshire and Nagel don't explain away the disagreeable character of fraud, violence, etc. Indeed, a central point of Williams's essay is that the kind of men we need in politics are those who preserve a sense of reluctance about doing the "morally disagreeable"—men who can do what is necessary, but with a continuing awareness of the moral cost involved.

Janet Hook

Janet Hook is an assistant editor of *The Public Interest.*

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Birdy
by William Wharton

(Alfred A. Knopf; $8.95)

This first novel is so accomplished in style, so assured of its grip on the reader, that one can easily doubt whether it really is a *first* novel. William Wharton is a graceful yet powerful storyteller who makes us believe even when we resist. He forces us to use our imaginations and convinces us of his characters' ability to overcome their infirmities yet revel in their eccentricities.

Birdy and Al grew up together in Pennsylvania. We encounter them at the close of World War II when Al, who has undergone several operations to restore a shrapnel-destroyed face, visits a mental hospital to try to bring Birdy out of a catatonic state. Al recognizes what Birdy's doctor doesn't—that Birdy's series of squats, flops and hops around his padded cell are imitations of bird behavior. Later we learn why these insane actions are not simply consequences of Birdy's war experiences, but extensions of his eccentric childhood.

As boys, Birdy and Al raised pigeons, with disastrous results. When Al lost interest, Birdy started to raise canaries. He didn't just raise them, he became obsessed by them, an obsession that Wharton makes so believable that by the time Birdy tells us, "I learn a lot of canary words and can tell her [his bird] to stay and to come and I learn a sound for eat and hello and good-bye. I'm beginning to hear the differences in the things she says"—we know he's right. We're equally convinced of Birdy's seriousness—and his sanity—in attempting to fly, and when he falls/leaps from a tower and survives it is no surprise.

Al, a tough Italian kid who lifts weights and wrestles so he can, at 16, pin his cruel father and who will discover the difference between being tough and being brave when he goes to war, is a perfect counterpoint to the skinny, reflective Birdy. Al wisecracks, Birdy dreams. Their friendship is unconditional, one of the best rendered boyhood relationships in recent fiction. Al is eventually successful at reaching the catatonic Birdy, and the book ends with a surreal scene (involving Birdy, Al, Birdy's shrink, a conscientious-objector orderly and a box of moldy baseballs) from which Birdy and Al emerge wiser, ready to go on with life, their rites of passage complete. Their childhoods, which didn't prepare them (but should have) for the world and the war that showed them how insane they are because they "can't accept the idea that things happen for no reason at all and that it doesn't mean anything," are behind them.

Wharton has infused his story of boyhood escape with the harshest of realities. There is harrowing, graphic violence in the descriptions of battle and of the destruction of stray dogs witnessed by the boys while they are employed as dogcatchers one summer, and there is hatred (and much damage) perpetrated by Birdy's mother and Al's father. Almost by definition, first novels contain hesitancies, an unsureness when it comes to fully engaging the imagination. *Birdy* is extraordinary because it lacks

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any tentativeness; it grabs and holds as its heroes grapple with life and flight.

Robert R. Harris

Robert R. Harris is the former book review editor of *Bookviews* magazine.

Democracy at Work by Daniel Zwerdling

(Association for Self-Management; $5)

Of all the issues inspired by the political ferment of the 1960s, few have shown as much staying power as that cluster of concerns under the heading "quality of working life." As the 1960s boom has been replaced by the 1970s recession, the discussion surrounding worker ownership and self-management has, if anything, increased. What began with vague references to "blue-collar blues" and "alienation in the work-place" has evolved into the practical consideration of concrete alternatives. Now, journalist Daniel Zwerdling has provided a useful overview of recent experiments in the reorganization of work in both the United States and Europe.

Zwerdling has often written in *The Progressive* and *Working Papers for a New Society* about the efforts of working Americans to assert more control over their work experiences, and in both format and style, *Democracy at Work* reads more like a series of magazine articles than a book. Taking as his theme the assertion that "in a society which is founded on the ideals of democracy, there is no democracy at work," Zwerdling catalogues a series of case studies, each a recent attempt to encourage more worker participation in the processes of industrial enterprises.

Democracy at Work has all the advantages and disadvantages of such a digest approach. Zwerdling is helpful in leading the reader through the maze of participation experiments, making careful distinctions between "humanization of work" projects (designed and controlled by management), "joint labor-management quality of work life committees," "worker-owned companies," and genuine "workers' self-management." The 14 different case studies provide detailed examinations of each. Particularly fascinating examples include the plywood producer cooperatives in the northwest that began as far back as 1921, where every worker "from shop-floor sweeper to the co-op president" earns equal pay; and the International Group Plans insurance company of Washington, DC, where activist founder and president James Gibbons has instituted a program of radical worker management. It is in this wealth of detail and attention to practical problems that *Democracy at Work* shines.

The digest format, however, proves less useful in addressing some of the broader conceptual issues raised by these workplace experiments. Don't these seemingly radical departures from the standard forms of industrial organization simply serve to make workers into better capitalists? (The case of the plywood co-ops comes to mind.) Can these experiments retain any of their innovative force when they exist, as they do in this country, in isolation from other social changes? How might the ideas embodied in these experiments be spread to other workers elsewhere; how might they be "sold" politically? Zwerdling raises these questions here and there in connection with specific cases, but they tend to get lost in all the detail. A more sustained, theoretical consideration is required.

Nevertheless, *Democracy at Work* is an important contribution to a widening discussion. It is a valuable source book for all those interested in expanding their sense of possibility concerning the organization of America's factories, mills and offices. As such, it is a worthwhile tool, for workers and managers alike.

Robert Howard

Robert Howard is a Washington writer.

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Washington Diarist

Moderation is a Virtue

It was George Will who set me to thinking about moderation. His January 21 column, from Provo, Utah, was a favorable essay about Mormons, who, he said, are "short on identity crises and long on certitude." When Barbara Walters interviewed Mormons Donny and Marie Osmond and got around to asking about premarital sex, Will observed, the two singers said: No. "Not, No, except . . . or No, unless. Just: No." Will said people might find this attitude peculiar, especially people off in Denver, where Will saw a sign advertising "The Newest Entertainment Rage: Mud Wrestling: Beautiful Girls Fighting Topless in a Pit of Real Mud." I thought when I read this: Why can't people be somewhere between Mormons who say "No, never" and those who patronize mud pits? Why can't people be moderate, like me?

I get the same feeling each January 22, the anniversary of the Supreme Court's abortion ruling. Thousands of militants invade Washington that day, as they did again this year, carrying red roses and demanding a constitutional amendment to forbid abortions to anyone, any time. There used to be, and may still be, ideologues on the other side arguing it's none of the court's or anybody else's business when in her pregnancy a woman chooses to abort her baby. The one side, bloody-minded in defense of biological "life," would declare it murder to eliminate even a microscopic fetus, even if it means millions of mothers and children will lead actual lives of woe. The other side, so upright about personal freedom, would avert its eyes while mothers do away with ninth-month unborn babies. Why can't there be a middle ground? In fact, the Supreme Court ruling is just that, and it is about time moderates got militant in defense of it, before the "right to life" movement intimidates Congress and the administration into policies that will put the back-alley abortion industry into business again.

Moderates don't get militant, of course, because it's not in their nature to behave immoderately. Often, too, they are cursed with the ability to see both sides of an issue, and not blessed with the ability to decide arbitrarily between them. Are we really running out of energy? Should we keep out illegal aliens? Is the Russian threat so great that we need to increase the defense budget, and deprive the sick and the poor? It must be a delight to be sure of the answers, but that is not the usual condition of moderates. It may look to you as though the regular state of moderates is indecision or equivocation, trying to find a way to have it both ways, but that's not so. Our usual condition is agony.

On the theoretical level, I can argue both sides of Barry Goldwater's famous proposition from the 1964 Republican convention: "Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice, and moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue." What usually happens in practice, though, is that extremists believe they can do anything and justify it in the name of liberty and justice. On the whole, I prefer people who seek virtue moderately, and I will take the risk that they won't know it when they see it.

A conscientious moderate is very lucky if he finds his way into journalism, where one gets paid for agonizing over what is true and right. Journalists secretly know they are in the profession because, whatever they decide, if they can decide, no ships will sail or wars will start because of what they say. They get to watch important events at close hand, think about them and speak their piece about them, but other people have to bear the burden of decision. The payoff for decision-makers—presidents, popes, shahs and legislators—is that they have a chance of going down in history, whereas journalists get mercifully forgotten.

This does not prevent journalists, though, from suffering over what decision makers ought to decide. *TNR*, I think, was given too little credit for this effort in a January 29 *New York Times* article which portrayed us as having abandoned our liberal traditions and gone "conservative." The article neglected to mention that many American liberals are in a quandary about important issues—inflation, Soviet intentions, how to foster equality—and are searching for ways to reconcile new realities with their traditional dedication to economic and political justice. We are in a quandary with them, and I think that's an honest place for a moderate liberal to be. Senator Kennedy can say he's for health insurance and urban programs, but he hasn't said what he's going to do about inflation and the Soviet buildup. President Carter is worried about inflation and the Soviet buildup, but he is acting on the economic front like a Republican. If there is not a middle way, perhaps there is a better way.

It is very hard for a liberal to react moderately toward Jerry Brown, however. Even if one is used to seeing both sides of every story, Brown's conversion to Reaganism seems nakedly opportunistic. The man apparently wants to get into the White House so badly that he is willing to sacrifice any political principle to it, and the US Constitution, too. He was against Proposition 13 until it won; now he perceives tax cutting and retrenchment as the wave of the future, and he is riding it. Now he has come out for a constitutional convention to pass an amendment mandating a balanced federal budget, even though there is no telling what other mischievous additions or subtractions the convenors could take up. It is one thing for a politician—or anybody—to receive new information, see problems differently and have a change of mind. It's another thing to be without a moral anchor, and that's what Jerry Brown seems to be.

A moderate with a moral anchor, I think, is Pope John Paul II. In Latin America, the Roman Catholic church is riven by the issue of "liberation theology"—the asserted right of radical priests to promote economic and social reform, even by guerrilla action. Church traditionalists, on the other side, support the status quo of dictatorship and peonage by claiming that the proper role of the church is ministering to spiritual needs alone. On his trip to Mexico, John Paul took a middle course between them—condemning violence and telling priests their primary role is not as "social messengers, political leaders or functionaries of a temporal power," but at the same time upholding human rights and criticizing deprivation. He has promised that the church will devote itself to helping the world's poor with "early and profound action." His stance was moderate; his words were compassionate. It will be an inspiration to us all if he can show us all how to act urgently and decisively.

M.M.K.

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